Map Of TH In 1858 Shows Old Wabash, Erie Canal

Community Affairs Page JAN 8 1975

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By RICHARD C. TUTTLE
Staff Writer

The year was 1858.

There were such street names as Tyler, Market, Fawn, Elk, Pine, Vine, Prairie, Sheets and Gookins in Terre Haute.

The Wabash & Erie Canal had gone bankrupt and almost carried the state with it. Railroads were dominating the transportation field, and becoming increasingly important in the hauling of freight.

However, the map of the community in the Terre Haute City Directory of 1858 showed the canal as it came from the north, paralleling the river, turning east at Canal Street to 9th St., curving south along the then Evansville & Crawfordsville Railroad. A 'spur' of the canal continued south to within a short block of Main St., to service the various industries and firms in that area.

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The directory was published by H.N. McEvoy, and in the preface admitted to some possible errors. In the directory listing, only the names of men and business firms were included. If a widow survived, the listing stated "Carr wid Eli Markets of Railroad." The man's vocation was also stated.

The advertisement on the front cover of the directory was for the "Young America Clothing House, M. Joseph Clothier." He was also a dealer in "Gents Furnishins. Goods and Boys Clothing." The firm was located in the Early Block on Main St.

Inside full page ads included one for Alschuler & Nicoloy, located at 8 Phoenix Row. They were specialists in ambrotypes, sphereotypes and melainotypes and plain photographs.

The publisher credited Charles Cruft and William K. Edwards for assistance in compiling the directory and providing historical data regarding the city and county. There were brief histories of Terre Haute, Vigo County and Ft. Harrison.

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The directory is part of the collection of city directories in the office of the Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce. Most of the older editions were from the collection of the late H.C. Condit, whose home on the campus of Indiana State University, is the home of the University President Dr. and Mrs. Alan C. Rankin.

McEvoy contends that all business firms were represented by advertising in the directory. At that time, doctors, dentists and attorneys advertised for business. There were 28 attorneys advertised, 24 physicians and surgeons; five banks, 15 dry goods firms, 7 butcher shops, 14 blacksmiths.

Also 11 hotels, four hardware stores, five livery stables, four lumber dealers, 20 tailors and clothiers, 11 milliners and dress makers, four job printers printing three newspapers, one dealer in oysters 'in season,' 4 saddlery firms, 11 whisky and wine merchants, 70 grocers, and 12 bakers and confectioners among other classifications.

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Some of the firms advertising in the directory were P.M. Donnelly, wholesale drugs, chemicals; Claussen, Jeffers & Bichowsky, liquors, wines, tobacco and cigars; T.H. Barr & Co., drugs, perfumes, and Barrs Own Syrup of Sarsaparilla and Barrs Pectoral Elixir.

Also Allen Pence, M.D., dealer in botanic and mineral medicines; Isaac Ball, undertaker; Mrs. A. Childs, millinery; Jacob Kern, jeweler; McKeen & Toussy, bankers; F.T. Hulman, wholesale groceries, teas, tobaccos, nails, salt, flour, fish, wines, whisky; S.B. Smith, dentist; W.H. Scudder, confectioner; A.J. Gosnell, guns; J.T. & W.E. Smith, architects; E. McDonnell, M.D., surgeon and accoucher; Wabash Exchanghe, restaurant and saloon.

Also G. and H. Glick, Brewers; J.C. Yates, hats; Dr. J.F. Warren, dentist; Tousey & Hagar, insurance; Charles Cruft, attorney; F.L. Rottman, groceries and liquors; J.H. Kester & Son, dry goods.

The directory listed benevolent organizations, Masonic lodges, churches, Odd Fellows lodges, and all city and township officials.

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Public schools had not yet been established, and the following private schools were operating:

—Old Seminary School, N. 6th St.

—Classical High School, Moses Soule, teacher.

—Female School, Mrs. Holmes, teacher.

—Male and Female School, Mr. and Mrs. Hayes, teachers.

—English and German School, conducted by Germans.

—Male and Female School (Sibleytown) Miss Trowbridge, teacher.

—A school house has been erected at 4th and Mulberry streets, which will be opened in a few weeks.

There was a Circuit Court, Common Pleas Court and Commissioners Court.

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Three railroads were the community, the Terre Haute & Richmond, the Terre Haute Alton and St. Louis, and the Evansville and Crawfordsville.

St. Mary-of-the-Woods had two pages devoted to its history, curriculum, with one particularly interesting note: "Letters written to the young ladies, or by them, are perused previously to their being delivered, for forwarded, and it is strictly required that all letters addressed to them to post-paid."

St. Vincent's Acadamy was said to be operated on the same principles as St. Mary-of-the-Woods.

Tuition at St. Mary-of-the-Woods was listed at $65 per session, with additional charges for foreign languages, music and art.

The number of firms represented in the directory indicates Terre Haute was a major mercantile center in 1858. The diversification of industry, retail and wholesale trade, education, and services throughout the years of development has created a solid economic base for the community.

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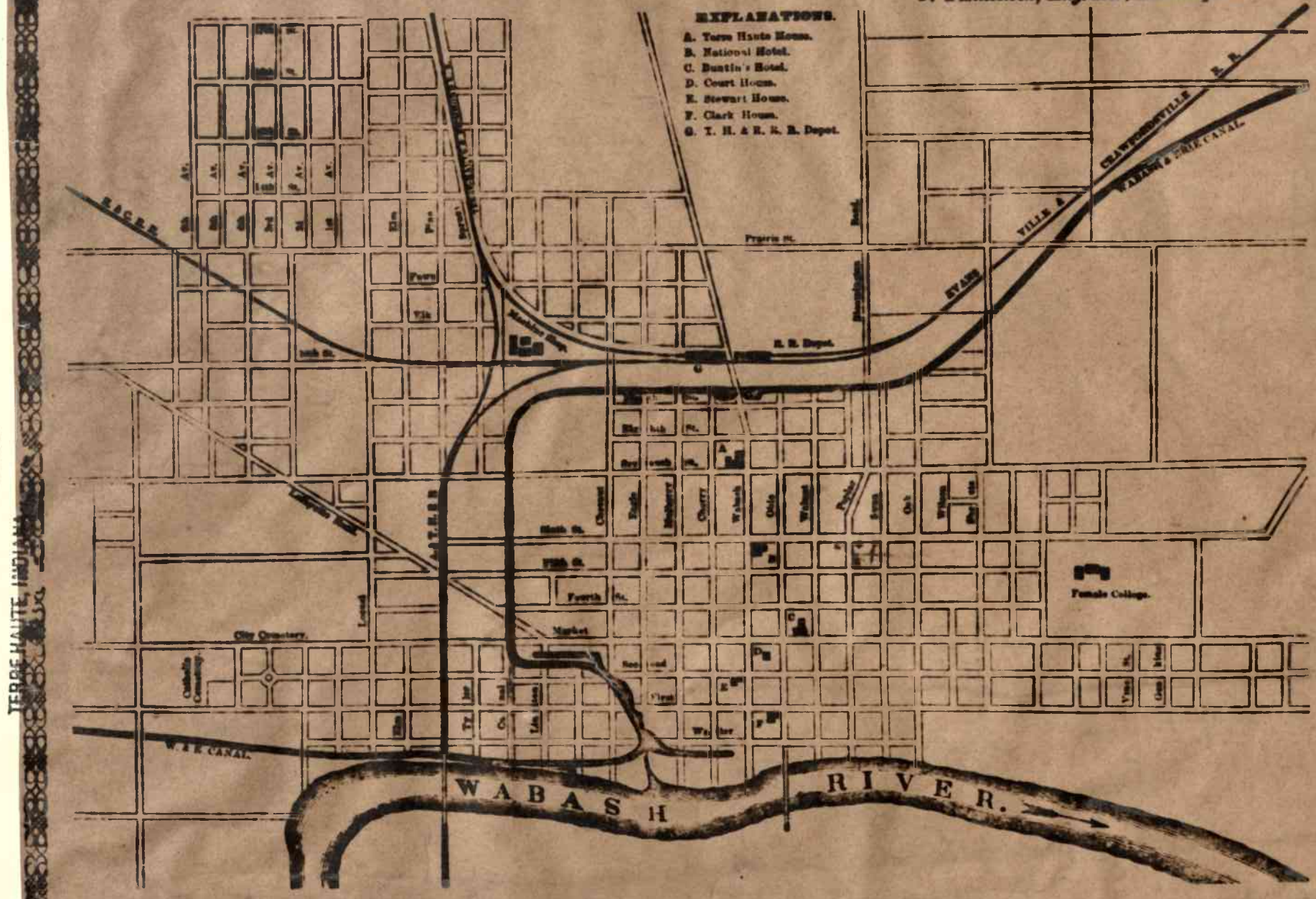
MAP

OF TERRE HAUTE AND SUBURBS,

COMPILED BY H. N. McEVOY.

J. Fahnestock, Engraver, Indianapolis.



Wabash + Erie Canal

TERRE HAUTE TRIBUNE. Wed., August 19, 1970.

Days of Towpath Recalled In New Historical Paper

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

Very few physical traces of the Wabash and Erie Canal are visible today, but the impact of the Canal on the state of Indiana has not been forgotten. The history of this waterway, how it was built, what part it played in the development of the state, its humorous and its tragic aspects still fascinate both the history buff and the casual reader alike.

Dorothy Clark

George DeLong, active member of the Tippecanoe County Historical Association, researched canal history and prepared a paper which he presented as a program. The material he shared was so delightful it was suggested that it be published.

Additional material was added by Assistant Curator Mary Blair Immel, and the publication informs and entertains a wide variety of people who want to know what it was like back in the days of the towpath and locks. The illustrations are very good and include maps, drawings, photographs and advertisements of the old canal.

The newly settled land in Indiana included much choice agricultural land. When the forests were cleared, this virgin soil produced abundant crops. The only natural highways by which farm products could be marketed were the Great Lakes and the Ohio River. The new settlers, in spite of the lush production of the new area, could see little promise for this Western country until arteries of commerce existed for the transit of their goods to market and for the shipment of the coveted Eastern manufactured goods to the settlers on the Indiana frontier.

Of Great Concern

The subject and problem of transportation was the greatest drawback to the progress of the state from the earliest settlement.

In 1826, a corps of United States engineers, under the charge of Col. James Shriver, was sent to survey the portage of Fort Wayne. All were soon sick and Col. Shriver died. Asa Moore continued the survey to Tippecanoe and then down the Maumee as far as the rapids, where he also died in 1828.

By the end of the second year, a thousand laborers were at work. Illnesses here were the most varied and the most deadly yet encountered by any canal diggers anywhere. The situation was to grow steadily worse until the time came when some said that ever six feet of completed channel had cost the life of one human being.

Even from the beginning, it has been necessary to distribute heavy doses of quinine, calomel and "blue mass" to these Hoosiers, with the whiskey-bearing jigger-boss making the rounds three times daily and six on Sunday.

Nor did the Canallers' trouble end with the plagues. For when they were not burying their dead, they were fighting each other, since the Irish workmen in Indiana were about equally divided between men from Cork and men from Ulster—"Corkers" and Far Downers." Tis meant a general skull-cracking on religious grounds whenever two of them chanced to meet.

By an Act of Congress, passed in March, 1827, for the purpose of enabling the State of Indiana to unite the water of the Wabash with those of Lake Erie, a donation of land was made to the State, equal to one-half of five sections in width, on each side of the canal, from one end thereof to the other, subject to the disposal of the Indiana Legislature. This grant of land was practically 3,200 acres for every mile of the canal route. To obtain this grant, work on the canal had to start by March 2, 1832.

The first ground was broken for the canal at Fort Wayne on Washington's birthday (the Father of his country was regarded as the progenitor of all the Western canal plans).

With the enactment of this legislation, which was without question based on the desire of the people, and that contained some features of merit, Indiana entered on a course of action destined to lead her for more than 30 years through a series of unhappy experience and embarrassments.

The main feature of the proposed system of internal improvements was to be the Wabash and Erie Canal, extending in a generally southward direction from the Ohio State line to the town of Terre Haute, near the Illinois boundary. About a dozen other canals, railroads and turnpikes were also provided for by the bill, all of which were to connect either with the main canal, the Ohio River or Lake Erie.

Borrowed Heavily

During the years 1836 to 1839 inclusive, Indiana borrowed 6,673,000 for the purpose of expanding her traffic routes. The financial chaos resulting from this public improvement spree is a story in itself. In 1841 the state offered to transfer nearly all the system to such private companies as might be willing to take its units, on condition that they be completed. Only the Wabash and Erie Canal was omitted from this offer and it remained the property of the state. Indiana's debt due to the work done on her improvements project then amounted to $9,500,000.

Indiana continued the operation of that part of the Wabash and Erie Canal already opened, and undertook to complete it to Terre Haute.

Started in 1832, the canal had reached Terre Haute in 1849, and was concluded to Evansville in 1853. The canal was then 458 miles long and was the longest artificial waterway in the country, and the longest canal in the world except the Grand Canal in China.

The concluding years of the Wabash and Erie Canal were characterized by active public hostility toward the enterprise in some parts of Indiana, and its usefulness was several times destroyed as a result of mob violence.

The first canal boats were patterned after the keel-boat barge of the earlier period. Soon the building of boats designed exclusively for passengers was necessary, known as packet-boats and line-boats. Packet-boats were almost luxurious, pulled by a better breed of livestock, and charged one or two cents a mile more and progressed as much as five miles per hour. Line-boats resembled tourist class, did not furnish bedding or food, and traveled at about two or two and a half miles an hour.

Both were floatng symphonies in either green, yellow, brown, red, white or blue, embellished with panels and window frames in other colors.

Traveling at five cents a mile, including meals and sleeping accommodations was established early and in 1852 the Wabash and Erie Canal reached the peak of its income. From that time on there was a gradual decline in revenue which was augmented in 1856 by the completion of the Wabash Railroad. By early 1870, the end of its existence as a highway of commerce was rapidly approaching. By 1875 no part of the canal remained in use. She had held the distinction of being not only America's longest canal, but also the most colossal, most tragic financial failure in all canal history.

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How Indiana got out of the canal business

Wabash and Erie Canal

Historically Speaking

By Dorothy Clark

Community Affairs File
Ts FEB 8 1981

Have you ever wondered just how the State of Indiana managed to get out of the financial mess caused by the building of the Wabash and Erie Canal? Most people know that the bankruptcy of the state canal caused the General Assembly to pass legislation forbidding the state to ever go into debt again.

Paul Fatout's book "Indiana Canals" tells it like it was in great detail. Under a variety of pressures, the legislature of 1858-59 took action on the matter.

"Disowned by the state, looked at askance by bondholders, the Wabash and Erie was a rejected child becoming more ragged by the month," said Fatout. "The year of 1857 repeated the depressing cycle of floods, breaks, drouth, another uprising of Clay County rebels cutting the bank at Eel River, and staggering expenses, the worst troubles occurring, as usual, on the white elephant of the southern division. During only two months out of 18 had the canal been navigable from Evansville to Toledo."

"Below Terre Haute bushes and briers clogged the unused towpath, which for weeks on end showed not one hoofprint of a towing mule. Freight moved in such driblets down there that receipts were about one-fifth of the more than $40,000 spent on repairs. On the whole line tolls dropped below those of 1856, and for the first time in years expenditures exceeded income."

Resident trustee Thomas Dowling of Terre Haute was deluged with complaints and gloomy news. He was attacked upon his trusteeship, his politics, personality, character, habits — almost as if the way he parted his hair and wore his hat affected his administration of canal affairs. Dowling must have been a strong man to stand up under such continual criticism and bad news.

Bondholders went to court and got an injunction against the trustees using any money other than toll receipts for repairs. This automatically forced the closing of the canal south of Terre Haute in 1858, and made it doubtful whether any part of the line could be opened in the spring of 1859.

Toll collectors were dismissed, superintendent's pay was cut by 20 percent, and all employees not strictly necessary were discharged in a valiant attempt to save funds. The legislature was asked for permission to lease the canal to private or municipal groups in order to keep it going.

From Fort Wayne to Evansville citizens held meetings to consider ways and means, and there was much ranting and raving. The long-suffering Dowling finally snapped back at the many assaults. "Receiving and disbursing for years," he said, "not less than an average of half a million dollars per annum, on a salary not half of that received by many a railroad president, on a road of 100 miles...I have never considered myself as eating the bread of idleness or as reclining on a bed of roses. I have earned all I have received."

Fatout commented, "The retort deserves applause. He had indeed earned his pay."

After the legislature of 1858-59 finally granted the trustee's request to lease to private groups, Dowling farmed out the whole line. In the north, the Wabash and Erie Canal Company composed of five Fort Wayne men, took a four-year lease from the state line to Terre Haute.

From Terre Haute to Point Commerce, Chauncey Rose, William P. Griswold James H. Turner and others leased for two years. Below that point, the Southern Indiana Canal Company leased to Evansville for four years.

The terms were that the trustees retain ownership and control, that lessees repair and rebuild structures as designated by the chief engineer, and that tolls be deposited to the credit of the trustees and kept as a reserve fund until termination of the contract, at which time net earnings would be turned over to lessees.

It was a noble effort, but to no avail. For a month or more in the spring the canal was in reasonably good boating order, but it did not remain so. The new officials were no more able to improve conditions than their predecessors. On the whole line, interruption and railroads reduced income for 1859 to $48,278.10 while expenses added up to $67,995.

Between 1860 and 1874 were years marking slow death of the W & E Canal. First to succumb was the section from Terre Haute to Newberry. Two men named Miller and Hedges volunteered to preserve 25 miles between Terre Haute and Eel River feeder dam, but the effort was short-lived.

By the fall of 1860, most of the Newberry section was abandoned. After a short time, the canal was broken by a gap of 57 unnavigable miles, channel silting up, towpath overgrown, abutments sinking, timbers rotting.

Even without violent weather the canal was still subject to slow abrasion of natural forces, or light winds and summer showers, of growing plants, burrowing crawfish, rust and shifting earth.

In May, 1860, a tornado blew trees into the channel, evildoers cut embankments at Prairie Creek aqueduct, and Clay County mutineers drained Birch Creek reservoir. In 1861 navigation ceased for good between Newberry and Pigeon Creek.

Stagnant water became such a nuisance in Evansville the city fathers ordered the filling in of the whole channel that wound through town.

About 16 years after the first boat sailed into Terre Haute, the Wabash and Erie again stopped there, at the point it should never have gone beyond in the first place. The southern division ended with a deficit of close to one million dollars. Below Terre Haute, the ditch was a costly mistake. Above Terre Haute the eastern section held out a little longer.

The Wabash River flooded eight times during 1862-63 and again in 1867. By 1868 navigation stopped at Armiesburg, 22 miles above Terre Haute, and never resumed. Terre Haute became another former canal port.

Having died in debt for more than $18 million, the canal was ordered to be sold. A public sale of the whole line was held at Terre Haute. The auction began Feb. 24, 1876 and attracted many bidders for a piece of what *The Express* called "The Old Ditch which winds like a serpent through the land."

The circuit court room was jammed when Judge Samuel B. Gookins, special master, read off a list of sections to be sold. Total receipts of $160,096 were reported.

Land titles to this day still puzzle abstractors trying to establish a clear title to property on or adjacent to the old line.

By about 1882, towns on the upper line drained the channel and filled it in. Railroads and interurban right-of-ways were established in the canal bed, on its towpath and berms. The Terre Haute and South Eastern Railroad took over the canal property in Greene, Clay and Vigo counties.

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Office Of The Erie Canal Stood Near Sixth And Ohio Streets

TERRE HAUTE TRIBUNE APR 11 1948

By A. R. Markle.

(From the notebooks of early Terre Haute.)

At the northwest corner of Sixth and Walnut stood a large two-story brick house which, at an early day, was the home of Judge Deming for a while before the building on the diagonally opposite corner became his later home. This building was the home of A. J. Edsall of the firm of Rice, Edsall & Co., founders of the Root Store in 1856. Rice died soon after the founding of the firm and Edsall followed him in 1865. Four years later, C. C. Oakey, who had begun as a clerk in the store, married Mrs. Edsall and lived in the house of his predecessor. P. J. Ryan, founder of the firm of that name, later owned the place in connection with his establishment that surrounded the property on the north and west.

The Deming House.

The property now the Y.M.C.A. was bought by the elder Deming, together with that whole block and some other property, for $400 and, in 1842, he built a very fine residence there. The plans, specifications and contract are still in existence after more than a century. After the removal of the son Demas to his own home on the corner to the south, his sister, Mrs. Wheeler, lived there until her death and soon after that the house was demolished.

The McKeen House.

On the corner of Sixth and Poplar William B. Tuell owned a frame house that he proposed to tear down for the erection of the present home of the Physicians and Surgeons Clinic. William J. Ball, resident engineer of the Wabash and Erie Canal, lived in that house and instead of its being demolished Theodore Hulman bought it and moved it to its present location at Sixth and Park streets.

Tuell then built the present building and lived in it until R. G. Hervey, who built the Illinois Midland Railroad, predecessor of the Peoria division of the Pennsylvania and was the owner of a bank in Decatur, traded his bank to Tuell for this house.

The Booth House.

On the lot now occupied by the Star Building at Sixth and Ohio stood a long frame house later replaced by a row of one-story bricks on Sixth street. This was the home of Captain Wasson, one-time owner of the Eagle and Lion tavern and, after his death, his widow married Dr. Ebenezer Daniels who lived there. Following these came Beebe and Newton Booth and a son of John P. Usher, of Lincoln's war time cabinet, once wrote the writer that he "peeped in the window and saw Lizzie Booth married to John Tarkington." These were the parents of Booth Tarkington who died recently after a lifetime of writing.

The Canal Office.

Farther up Ohio street, where now stands Mace's garage, was a large brick house built for the offices of the Wabash and Erie Canal in the days of early transportation in Terre Haute. After Thomas Dowling took over the affairs of the canal, he moved the offices to Dowling Hall and the property became the home of Lucius Royce, later bought by George W. Bement and known as the Bement House even after the Terre Haute Auto Club occupied it.

The Usher House.

A little farther east in the same block, John P. Usher built the house known to later generations as the Hulman home, where Herman Hulman lived so long. Built by Usher, then a prominent member of the Terre Haute bar and later secretary of the interior at the time of Lincoln's assassination, it was demolished at the time of the erection of the Telephone Building. On the night of the attack on Lincoln and Seward, Usher escaped by reason of his being at the station to see his family off for home and the call at his house by an armed man failed to reach him. He later became an attorney for the Union Pacific Railroad and died in Kansas.

Ezra Smith Built and Left Town.

At the corner of the alley on the north side of Ohio, east of the Congregational church, Ezra W. Smith built another of the fine houses that once graced Ohio street. One of the owners of the Phoenix Block, at Third and Wabash, east of Third on the north side, Smith was a wealthy man for those days and he built a house in keeping with his means. Having built the house, he sent out invitations to the local "400" to a great party to be held as a housewarming and made preparations for a sumptuous affair. The evening came, the family attired suitably for the occasion were waiting for their guests, but with the exception of Judge Huntington no one appeared. One by one the family retired until only Smith and the judge were left to sip the wine and eat the refreshments. Finally, even the judge left and from that evening no one ever saw Ezra Smith, or, if they did, made no report of it. Later he was adjudged dead, the widow married the judge and the family left here. In time the Terre Haute Club bought the property, made many changes and improvements and finally sold it to the Y.M.C.A.

(To Be Continued.)

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Canal Basin and Dry Docks Were Once Terre Haute Terminal

Nov. 16, 1947

By A. R. Markle.

THE age old problem of overproduction in one locality and under consumption in another affected the pioneer in Indiana. With corn selling here at 6¼ cents and in New York bringing 50 cents, the serious lack of transportation brought about a demand for turnpikes, canals and railroads and resulted in the Mammoth Improvement movement in the early thirties that almost bankrupted Indiana.

A railroad from Indianapolis to the Ohio river, a wagon road from Lafayette to the Ohio and a canal to connect the north and middle sections with Lake Erie and the Wabash river were projected as a result of the demand for an outlet to water transportation. Vigo county wheat was being hauled to Chicago, sent by flat boat to the Gulf, while locally corn was being made into pork and whisky for sale to raise the money to pay for the land of the settlers.

The Railroads.

The first railroad was started from New Albany for Indianapolis by state money, the turnpike from the same point toward Lafayette was likely to succeed and the canal from Maumee bay to the mouth of the Tippecanoe, when the state ran out of money, its credit in danger and all work stopped on all projects. The railroad was finished under private owonership, the wagon road was abandoned and no one was any better off for all the millions spent on construction.

The Canals.

Most impressive of all were the canals. The original plan of the Wabash and Erie canal was to reach the mouth of the Tippecanoe river, supposed to be the head of navigation of the Wabash and a branch was to take off near Peru and run south to Indianapolis and on to meet the White river at Worthington. When it was found that no steamboat could reach the Tippecanoe at the height of the summer, it was planned to terminate at Lafayette. The needs of Terre Haute and vicinity were to be filled by a cross cut canal from here to Point Commerce, but this also came under the spell of the financial stringency and was abandoned for a time.

Local Help.

Money was raised and the legislature appealed to successfully for funds and the work again started. The summit level was to be supplied by a large reservoir fed by Birch and Splunge creeks in Clay, county, while water was also to be taken from Eel river. Pressure from upriver points brought about the extension to Terre Haute from Lafayette and though construction was more difficult and often delayed by flood waters of the Wabash and breaks in the walls of the canal it was finally finished and the E. A. Hannegan and G. R. Walker, two canal boats arrived at Terre Haute, October 25, 1849.

The Route Through Terre Haute.

The entrance to our present city was along the present tow path from Fort Harrison to the present Big Four Railroad and the bridge of that road's predecessor, the Terre Haute & Alton, was built to clear it. On south on the line of Water street it almost reached Cherry street but the real traffic ended in the basin that was close to the present Growers Market between First and Second and Eagle and Chestnut. From the northeast corner of the basin a short leg reached across Chestnut to the dry docks that emptied when necessary in to the basin the water that it received at its north end from the Cross Cut canal that ran beside it on the west.

A lock close to Second street allowed the boats to pass from the canal to the basin and the house of the lock keeper still stands there. The course of the canal then ran north in what now is a railroad switch to turn to the east along what is now the track of the railroad to Eighth street, where it started a great curve to enter what was known as Canal street, as we call Ninth and One-half. At Wabash a high red covered bridge allowed teams and persons to cross and on each side of Wabash where two deep and wide basins which allowed boats to turn after unloading at the Rose warehouse on the east. The Hulman building and the railroad now cover this basin on the north and on the south after Terre Haute used the bed to construct its first sewer, the canal was filled and became a street. On the south the canal ran through the passage at the Terre Haute Brewery and soon changed its course slightly to the east of south and passed out of the city by the line marked by the right of way of the present Milwaukee road. On its bank south of Washington avenue stood the old Vigo blast furnace, north of Poplar was the Terre Haute Brewery and at Ohio the foundry of Arba Holmes, later the Car Works. At the Basin were two large warehouses which held at the opening of navigation in April, 1854, 148,999 bushels of corn, 6,000 bushels of wheat and 6,000 bushels of oats.

First Boats.

June 5, 1850, the first boat from Terre Haute reached Point Commerce and October 4, 1853, the Pennsylvania passed from Terre Haute to Evansville. Two months later the entire line from Toledo to the Ohio was in operation. Its life and death form another chapter in the life of Terre Haute.

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Clark, Dorothy * Canals (Ind.)

Romance of canals survives the years

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By Dorothy J. Clark

Historical society

Most canal enthusiasts, those persons with special interests in historic canals and their preservation, belong to the American Canal Society organized in 1972 in York, Pa. Heaviest concentration of membership is in the northeastern United States. New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Chesapeake and Ohio, Delaware, and Hudson are members as well as British Waterways.

Long-forgotten canals in the U.S. and Canada are always of interest to true canal buffs. A boat ride on the Rideau Locks portion of the Rideau Waterway at Jones Fall, Ontario, is an interesting trip.

Good water for canals is something hard to come by in these times of pollution and the Canal Society believes that treated waste water is better for a canal than polluted river water.

Many of the canals of the world depend on the rivers they parallel. Many of the rivers are polluted...and so are the canals which receive their water from them. The Potomac is certainly one of the polluted rivers and is likely to remain one for some time.

The Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, which receives its water from the Potomac River is likewise polluted, with signs along its route warning of bodily contact with canal water. Plans are now being made to use advanced waste treatment effluent from a sewage treatment plant to be constructed in Montgomery County to water the C & O Canal.

An intelligent canal lover would prefer to have clean water in his canal than polluted water. It's hoped this will serve as a model for other communities.

The Delaware & Raritan Canal in New Jersey is unique because it is one of the few remaining historic canals of the U.S. which is intact, watered and used. Threatened with being closed in with infringement and development, it will take action by the New Jersey legislature to assure its continued existence.

Citizen groups are at work on the Erie Canal in New York, on the Illinois & Michigan Canal in Illinois, and on the James River & Kenawha Canal in Virginia, on the Cumberland & Oxford Canal in Maine, and so on.

It took 17 years of concerted citizen action to create the first national canal park, the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, linking Washington, D.C. and Cumberland, Md.

Through the years, excursions on mules-or-horse-drawn boats occasionally were arranged, but the regularly scheduled passenger service on the canals provided by the horse-drawn packet boats lasted only a few years. The canal was no match for the railroad in getting passengers to their destinations expediently.

Some of the eastern canals eventually became an attraction for pleasure boaters and wealthy yacht owners who were frequent users of the canals in later years.

Something new in the historical publishing field are reproductions of rare old documents, maps, books, drawings and other artifacts dealing with early transporation history, with emphasis on canals.

"Old Wabash & Erie Canal in Carroll County" written by Dora Thomas Mayhill in 1953 was reprinted in 1973. This well-illustrated excellent text of 100 pages covers the history of the river and canal transportation in Indiana from Indian times. The price is $5.00.

Another booklet, "Low Bridge and Locks Ahead on the Whitewater Canal," by Milford Anness tells of the truly colorful era of Indiana history, the period when packet boats plied the gently moving waters of the early canals. The booklet at 65 cents is a "trip into yesterday," the story of one of the Hoosier canals.

Harry Sinclair Drago's book "Canal Days in America" tells the history and romance of old towpaths and waterways. Containing 352 pages and over 150 illustrations in hardcover and indexed, the $10 book describes the 4,000 mile network of canals built following the War of 1812.

The reprint of Mitchell's "Compendium of Canals and Railroads" first published in 1835, provides complete description and data on existing canals and railroads in the 26 states, Wisconsin Territory and Canada just as they were at the time of an extensive survey by Mitchell & Hinman of Philadelphia in 1835. The faithful facsimile of the rare 84-page handbook sells for $2.95.

Information on the Wabash & Erie Canal as it passed through Terre Haute can be researched at the Vigo County Public Library. Evidences of the old canal can be seen at the Elks Club north of the city, the canal locks near Riley, Ind., and another area on the Springhill Road.

Canal buffs include the locations mentioned above on their vacation trips to the eastern part of the U.S. and abroad.

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man's surname (inevitably the surname of his owner), his given name, his county of residence, the unit in which he served, and his pension application number. After finding a name on this index, a researcher can then order the entire record from the TSLA. There were no pensions

worker's last name (again, his owner's surname), his given name, the name of the slave owner, and the file number. This database provides another snapshot of the slave's situation immediately prior to being freed and ties the slave worker to the name of a master or owner.

lists the 3,929 citizens of Tennessee who made such claims. The files include a description of the loss, testimony of witnesses, and a loyalty oath to the Union. The files of the Southern Claims Commission (for all states) are housed in the National Archives. The Tennessee State Library and

number, unit in which he served, widow's name, and type of claim. After finding a person of interest on this index, a researcher can order the actual application, which is likely to include much interesting genealogical information.

Continued next week.

Canals (Ind)

Col. George Purdy remembers the Canal Days and Mrs. McGinnis

Lt. Col. George H. Purdy had a distinguished military career.

Purdy organized 103 Vigo County men into Company H of the 77th Indiana Regiment which, in response to the Confederate raid on Newburgh, Ind., of July 1862, was designated the Fourth Indiana Cavalry by Gov. Oliver Morton.

Purdy relocated his family to Terre Haute from Massachusetts in 1848 – 160 years ago – to build aqueducts over the Wabash & Erie Canal.

When the canal failed, Purdy built bridges for the Indianapolis & St. Louis Railway. In 1878, he went to work for Crawford Fairbanks to construct buildings at Fairbanks' distillery and then to expand the Terre Haute Brewing Co.

A few weeks before entering the National Soldier's Home in Danville, Ill. in July 1904, at age 81, Lt. Col. Purdy reminisced about his canal days.

"The most exciting day that I remember in connection with the construction of the old Wabash and Erie Canal was Thanksgiving Day 1848," Purdy recalled.

"The construction gang had reached a point a few miles north of Terre Haute at what was known as the Otter Creek aqueduct. The total number of men employed, as I recall, was 5,000. This gang was divided into sections and lined the banks of the canal from the Otter Creek aqueduct to Crabb's Locks, opposite the town of Clinton.

"The right of way looked like a small village as temporary shanties were built close to the right of way. Nearly every known nationality was represented among the 5,000 men but the majority were made up of Irish and Germans.

"For many days before Thanksgiving, packages of all kinds of spirituous ferments had been coming into camp and other preparations had been made for celebrating the holiday.

"During the first part of the day every one of the 5,000 men were jolly and friendly but after the noon feast the Irish and the Germans became involved in a quarrel over some trivial matter. This quarrel developed into a free-for-all fight which lasted over two hours and presented the most exciting scene imaginable outside of a battle skirmish.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

MIKE MCCORMICK

"Several of the shanties were set on fire by the opposing parties and a number of men were badly beaten but, fortunately, no one was killed.

"The fight was ended by a woman named Mrs. McGinnis, a big strong Irish widow who used a shovel and flayed half a dozen of the ringleaders of the melee.

"Mrs. McGinnis owned one of the boarding shanties and had over 150 men boarding with her. She was a most kindly woman with a sympathetic heart but, when it came down to a fight, she could handle the best man on the works with ease.

"Many times I have known her boarders to get into rows which would end with her threshing one or more of them. She was a large woman, a little over six feet tall and weighed 245 pounds.

"The row of that Thanksgiving Day was more exciting than I can describe and it is a wonder than more than one man was not killed."

☆☆☆

Each time this column discusses Terre Haute's professional roller polo team, it seems to startle new readers.

For the uninitiated, roller polo is hockey on roller skates. Founded in England in 1878, it was introduced to the U.S. in 1882 with the formation of the National Roller Polo League in Dayton.

Today, the sport is called "roller hockey." It was a demonstration sport at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona. Argentina won the team title, surprising favorites Portugal and Spain. The U.S. finished seventh.

The Hottentots – Terre Haute's initial entry in the 1903-04 Central League – were competitive. The squad consisted of five players including a goalkeeper and one reserve. The local team started strong and maintained first place through much of the season.

Crowds in The Coliseum at the northeast corner of Eighth and Cherry streets were excellent. The sport attracted a sophisticated audience, including what was referred to as "society women." The audience diminished somewhat only when a top-flight attraction appeared at the Grand Opera House.

The Coliseum comfortably seated 2,400 spectators and had room for an additional 500 "standing room only" space.

As the 1903-04 season progressed, other teams caught up with the Hottentots. The locals, owned by brothers Daniel and Harry Bronson (who also owned The Coliseum), finished fourth. By keeping its home victory streak nearly intact, the local squad maintained crowd size.

Members of the pro roller polo squad – Captain Hipson, Hadley, Harkin, Freeman, Wood and Mullen – were Terre Haute's winter heroes. Roller polo easily surpassed basketball, invented by Dr. James Naismith in 1891, as the No. 1 team sport.

Hipson, Hadley, Wood and Mullen were chosen to the Central League All-Star team.

Each pro game was preceded by an amateur contest and, by the end of the season, Terre Haute's Midget League had its own list of idols: Elmore, John and Cecil Ferguson, Anton Peterson, George Burgett, E.T. Walker and Harry Miller.

☆☆☆

Sheet music sales was the only method to determine a song's popularity during the later 19th Century and well into the 20th Century.

In 1903, it was revealed that Terre Haute's Paul Dresser was America's most popular composer between 1883 to 1903.

"After the Ball," composed by Charles K. Harris in 1891, was America's most popular song during that timeframe but "On the Banks of the Wabash Far Away," written by Dresser in 1897, was second in sheet music sales and "Just Tell Them that You Saw Me," another Dresser standard, was third. Twenty-five of Dresser's compositions made Billboard magazine's Top 20.

Terre Haute Tribune-Star Sunday Sept 28, 2008 pD5

Wabash + Erie Canal

Map Of TH In 1858 Shows Old Wabash, Erie Canal

By RICHARD C. TUTTLE
Star Staff Writer

The year was 1858.

There were such street names as Tyler, Market, Fawn, Elk, Pine, Vine, Prairie, Sheets and Gookins in Terre Haute.

The Wabash & Erie Canal had gone bankrupt and almost carried the state with it. Railroads were dominating the transportation field, and becoming increasingly important in the hauling of freight.

However, the map of the community in the Terre Haute City Directory of 1858 showed the canal as it came from the north, paralleling the river, turning east at Canal Street to 9th St., curving south along the then Evansville & Crawfordsville Railroad. A 'spur' of the canal continued south to within a short block of Main St., to service the various industries and firms in that area.

+ + +

The directory was published by H.N. McEvoy, and in the preface admitted to some possible errors. In the directory listing, only the names of men and business firms were included. If a widow survived, the listing stated "Carr wid Eli Markets of Railroad." The man's vocation was also stated.

The advertisement on the front cover of the directory was for the "Young America Clothing House, M. Joseph Clothier." He was also a dealer in "Gents Furnishins. Goods and Boys Clothing." The firm was located in the Early Block on Main St.

Inside full page ads included one for Alschuler & Nicoloy, located at 8 Phoenix Row. They were specialists in ambrotypes, sphereotypes and melainotypes and plain photographs.

The publisher credited Charles Cruft and William K. Edwards for assistance in compiling the directory and providing historical data regarding the city and county. There were brief histories of Terre Haute, Vigo County and Ft. Harrison.

+ + +

The directory is part of the collection of city directories in the office of the Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce. Most of the older editions were from the collection of the late H.C. Condit, whose home on the campus of Indiana State University, is the home of the University President Dr. and Mrs. Alan C. Rankin.

McEvoy contends that all business firms were represented by advertising in the directory. At that time, doctors, dentists and attorneys advertised for business. There were 28 attorneys advertised, 24 physicians and surgeons: five banks, 15 dry goods firms, 7 butcher shops, 14 blacksmiths.

Also 11 hotels, four hardware stores, five livery stables, four lumber dealers, 20 tailors and clothiers, 11 milliners and dress makers, four job printers printing three newspapers, one dealer in oysters 'in season,' 4 saddlery firms, 11 whisky and wine merchants, 70 grocers, and

See YEAR—1858
On Page 15, Column 2

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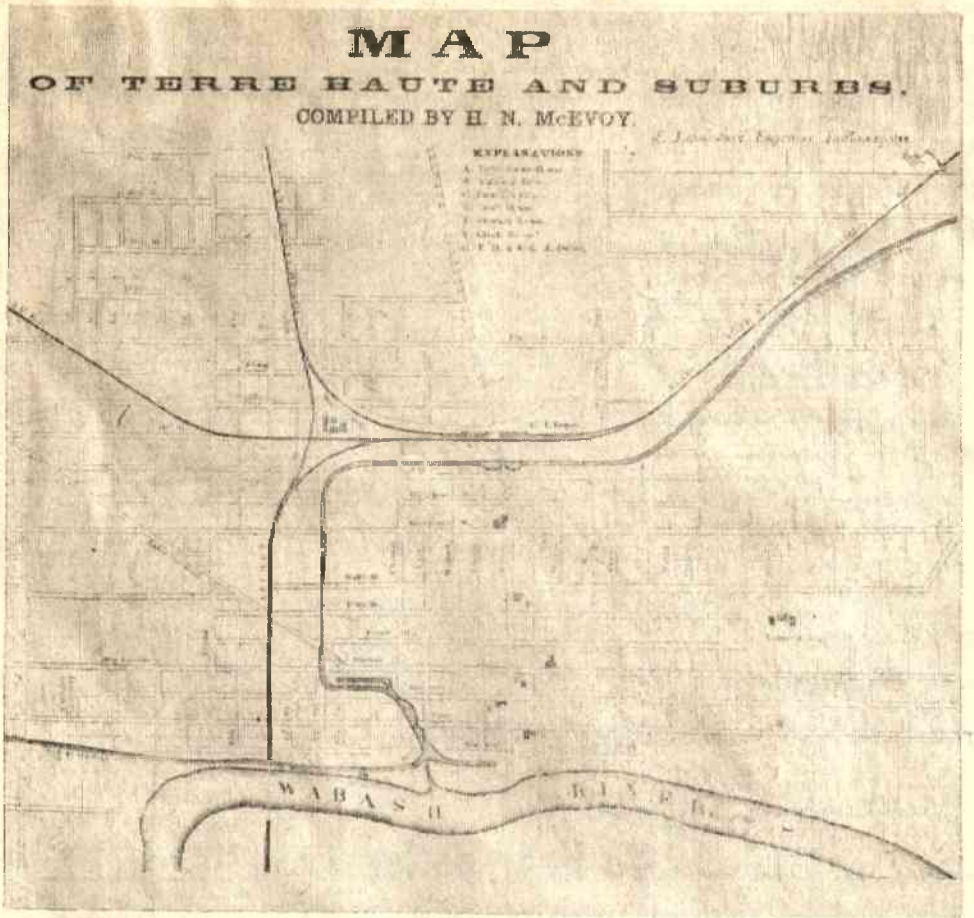
Star 1-8-75



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING — Well, only 42 years after the city was platted. The map, in excellent condition, is in the front of the 1858 city directory. The Wabash & Erie Canal is clearly shown, parallel to the river, then east to 9½ St., then parallel to the Evansville & Crawfordsville Railroad southeast. Note both Wabash Ave. (Main St.) and Poplar St. had bends at that time. The following buildings and locations are shown: Terre Haute House, 7th and Main Sts.; National Hotel, 6th and Main Sts.; Buntin's Hotel, 3rd between Ohio and Walnut; Court House, present location: Stewart House, 2nd and Main Sts.; Clark House, 1st and Ohio Sts.; and Terre Haute & Richmond Railroad depot, Main St. and the railroad. (Photo by Kadel)

hijacker was seized as he left the plane with steward Alan Bond at gunpoint.

Year-1858

Continued From Page 1

12 bakers and confectioners among other classifications.

+ + +

Some of the firms advertising in the directory were P.M. Donnelly, wholesale drugs, chemicals; Claussen, Jeffers & Bichowsky, liquors, wines, tobacco and cigars; T.H. Barr & Co., drugs, perfumes, and Barrs Own Syrup of Sarsaparilla and Barrs Pectoral Elixir.

Also Allen Pence, M.D., dealer in botanic and mineral medicines; Isaac Ball, undertaker; Mrs. A. Childs, millinery; Jacob Kern, jeweler; McKeen & Toussy, bankers; F.T. Hulman, wholesale groceries, teas, tobaccos, nails, salt, flour, fish, wines, whisky; S.B. Smith, dentist; W.H. Scudder, confectioner; A.J. Gosnell, guns; J.T. & W.E. Smith, architects; E. McDonnell, M.D., surgeon and accoucher; Wabash Exchanghe, restaurant and saloon.

Also G. and H. Glick, Brewers; J.C. Yates, hats; Dr. J.F. Warren, dentist; Tousey & Hagar, insurance; Charles Cruft, attorney; F.L. Rottman, groceries and liquors; J.H. Kester & Son, dry goods.

The directory listed benevolent organizations, Masonic lodges, churches, Odd Fellows lodges, and all city and township officials.

+ + +

Public schools had not yet been established, and the following private schools were operating:

—Old Seminary School, N. 6th St.

—Classical High School, Moses Soule, teacher.

—Female School, Mrs. Holmes, teacher.

—Male and Female School, Mr. and Mrs. Hayes, teachers.

—English and German School, conducted by Germans.

—Male and Female School (Sibleytown) Miss Trowbridge, teacher.

—A school house has been erected at 4th and Mulberry streets, which will be opened in a few weeks.

There was a Circuit Court, Common Pleas Court and Commissioners Court.

+ + +

Three railroads were the community, the Terre Haute & Richmond, the Terre Haute Alton and St. Louis, and the Evansville and Crawfordsville.

St. Mary-of-the-Woods had two pages devoted to its history, curriculum, with one particularly interesting note: "Letters written to the young ladies, or by them, are perused previously to their being delivered, for forwarded, and it is strictly required that all letters addressed to them to post-paid."

St. Vincent's Acadamy was said to be operated on the same principles as St. Mary-of-the-Woods.

Tuition at St. Mary-of-the-Woods was listed at $65 per session, with additional charges for foreign languages, music and art.

The number of firms represented in the directory indicates Terre Haute was a major mercantile center in 1858. The diversification of industry, retail and wholesale trade, education, and services throughout the years of development has created a solid economic base for the community.

Early Canal Plans For Terre Haute, And What Became of the Project

9-14-52

By A. R. Markle.

WHEN Chauncey Rose became a citizen of Terre Haute in 1825, he had a capital of about $2,000, which he invested in a small general store. Very little is known of him at that time, but we do know that when the Terre Haute Branch of the State Bank of Indiana opened in January of 1834, he was a stockholder.

The original directors of the Branch Bank were prominent men in the business circles of the young town. They were: Demas Deming, Curtis Gilbert, Chauncey Rose, J. Sunderland, J. D. Early, J. B. McCall, David Linton, and Samuel Crawford.

Before this time, Rose had erected a small two-story building at the northwest corner of Second and Ohio streets. Facing on Second street were four store rooms and he occupied the room at the corner. He rented the second room to the Branch Bank, where it remained until the completion of its new building on the south side of Ohio between Second and Third streets. This would have been in the early summer of 1836, for in its reports to the state auditor, it lists the rent as $250.00 for the first and second years and $125.00 for part of the third year. In the year 1836, they had bought the lots and erected the building which still stands and is now known as Memorial Hall.

Real Estate Values.

Stockholders in the Branch Bank did not have to make payment for their stock at the time of purchase and, with proper sureties, could borrow from the bank's funds. It is probably from this source that Rose gained a good part of the money he needed for the purchase of the land lying east of the present Seventh and as far as the present Thirteenth street, and between Poplar and Locust streets. It is also probable that there was very little bidding for such a large tract of land, lying as it did, so far from the town and fit for little more than farming.

It is questionable whether Rose foresaw the coming of the canal and the railroads which would bring increased land values in and around the rapidly growing town. However, almost any man of vision could reasonably assume that there would be considerable growth of the town toward the east, rather than much more to the north or south. With the National Road leading to the State Capitol, the main artery of travel naturally changed from north and south to east and west.

The Wabash and Erie Canal was a part of the Mammoth Improvement Act sponsored by the state of Indiana to afford transportation, water power, the advance of immigration and the settlement of this new western country. It was intended to connect the waters of Lake Erie with the head-waters of the Wabash river. Steamboat traffic was supposed to be available at the mouth of the Tippecanoe river, but before that point was reached, it became evident that Lafayette would be a better terminus, and the act was amended to provide for an extension of the project to that point.

Terre Haute Takes Action.

The Central Canal, which was expected to come from near Peru, through Indianapolis, to reach the White river near the present city of Worthington, was another project and others besides Rose saw that Terre Haute would gain if they provided access from Terre Haute to that waterway. The injunction of the two routes became known as Point Commerce. The project was to be known as the Cross-Cut Canal and the Legislature included it in the main project.

However, due to the lack of water at the summit level of the Central Canal, between Peru and the White river, very little of the work was done on that portion of the project. A feeder-dam was built at Broad Ripple in Marion county and that, and the water from it, is all that is left today of that portion of the Central Canal.

The abandonment of the Central Canal almost meant the death of the Cross-Cut Canal, but the opportunity to tap the agricultural resources of the neighborhood it would traverse brought about offers to complete it. One of these came from a syndicate which included Chauncey Rose. However, the plan was not successful.

Extension From Lafayette.

The terminus at Lafayette, while it provided a great deal of water power, still required trans-shipment of cargoes from the canal boats to the steamboats. The idea of carrying the canal traffic between Lafayette and Terre Haute gained in favor as providing an all-Indiana route by using the Cross-Cut Canal and the southern end of the Central Canal, down the White River Valley and on to Evansville. This plan was the one finally adopted and completed.

That portion of the canal in Terre Haute from Seventh street, across the present Depot Park to Ninth and One-half street, and thence south to Poplar, ran through Rose's property.

Regardless of whether he sold or gave the right-of-way to the Canal, it did give greater value to his adjoining property.

Rose and other Terre Haute business men tried to raise funds to complete the Cross-Cut Canal, but failed. The State again took up the task and with its help, the canal was finally completed.

Co-operative Efforts Succeed.

Realizing what better transportation could mean to Terre Haute, Rose and others obtained a charter to build a railroad across the State of Indiana from the Ohio to the Illinois state lines. A crew of surveyors under General Thomas A. Morris brought a line from Indianapolis through Danville, to Greencastle, which reached Terre Haute by a route which corresponds very closely to that of the New York Central. They departed from what is now the present line to terminate in Mr. Rose's cornfield east of the canal, which proved to be about the north end of the present Pennsylvania Freight House.

Not fully satisfied, another survey was made which touched Plainfield, but failed to touch within a half mile of the Greencastle Court House. The Legislature permitted the route to be run according to its present line, which is the route of the Pennsylvania Railroad, but it also terminated at the point reached by the first survey.

Associated in this bold undertaking were: Chauncey Rose, president; Samuel Crawford, Elijah M. Huntington, James H. Turner, W. W. Reynolds, J. M. Mullikin, James Farrington, Thomas I. Bourne and R. W. Thompson.

(Col. III Con'td Early Canal Plans)

Sunday, July 8, 1951.

Early Terre Haute Cheered By First Plans For Erie Canal Here

7-8-51

By A. R. Markle.

We have seen that the two per cent of the money derived from the sale of public lands was used by the federal government to build a National road. However, the three per cent which was returned to the states by the government was intended for public works within the state, and this could have included the building of roads, canals and railroads.

The primary need was for roads by which the agricultural products could be brought to market. Also, roads could be constructed quickly and at lower cost, while improvement of them could be delayed until later; they could be extended to reach other towns and communities and over them the transportation of mails, merchandise, and immigrants was made easier; in a short time, networks of them would cover the more settled portions of the state.

While canals and railroads would produce greater economic benefits, they could not be built piecemeal or for temporary use. The canal would have to be constructed and filled with water, with locks, dams, and feeders, in fact, the complete system would have to be built before any of it could be of benefit. The same was true of railroads; the grading, the bridging, the laying of track and the acquisition of rolling stock must all be accomplished before any use could be made of it.

Canals.

The construction of the canal was favored because it would require only wood, stone, and labor, which were cheap and plentiful. The railroad, on the other hand, would require rails and rolling stock which would have to come from the far-off eastern industrial centers.

The Erie Canal, which had been built and operated by the State of New York, was a successful project, for it furnished an immediate means for transportation and brought about higher prices for our exports, and at the same time, lowered the cost of imports.

Our shortest route to eastern markets was by way of Lake Erie and the Erie Canal and the people of northeastern Indiana clamored for a canal to reach the Maumee Bay at Toledo. The people of southeastern Indiana, however, objected to any public improvement paid for with the three per cent fund which would benefit only a small portion of the state.

A survey was started as a private project for a canal up the Whitewater Valley to Fort Wayne. The engineer of this project died of malaria near Fort Wayne before his survey was completed, and a new engineer, Jesse Williams, finished the work, but pointed out that more advantage would be gained by the construction of a canal across the summit area between the Maumee and the Wabash. This suggestion was immediately supported by those who favored the Maumee Canal.

Realizing the far greater cost of this project, Congress granted an appropriation of the proceeds from each alternate section of land within five miles of either side of the proposed route, which was to be the Wabash & Erie Canal. As part of this project lay within the State of Ohio, that state started a branch known as the Ohio & Erie Canal, which reached to Cincinnati.

Building The Canal.

Work was started at Fort Wayne and the first report of the trustees showed that 20 miles had been built and there was still a balance of $104.000.00 for further improvement. Some 40,000 acres of the land granted had been sold for about $70,000.00, and as the work progressed, this revenue was increased by appropriations by the Legislature from the two per cent fund. As the work proceeded down the Wabash Valley, thousands of men were employed, among them many Irish immigrants. Native labor along the line was also used and many settlers from the vicinity of the route paid for their land with wages earned in this construction. Contracts were let for small sections of a half mile or more each.

The Central Canal.

The original plan was to build to the mouth of the Tippecanoe, which was to have been the head of navigation, but in time it became necessary to move the terminus to Lafayette, where steamboat travel was fairly constant. The plan also included the Central Canal, which was to run from Peru through Indianapolis to Point Commerce on the White River, near the present city of Worthington. Before much construction was done on this branch, it was found that the water supply was insufficient to supply enough for the summit level, and all that remains of that project is the Broad Ripple Dam. The canal from the dam entered Indianapolis, but work beyond there was abandoned, as well as that in the northern section.

Neither of these routes gave Terre Haute any means of reaching the eastern seaports by way of the Wabash & Erie Canal, Lake Erie, the Erie Canal, and the Hudson River in New York State, and very early in the construction period, Terre Haute and vicinity brought pressure to bear on the Legislature for the construction of a canal from Terre Haute to Point Commerce, on the White River.

Financial Troubles.

The canal funds were entrusted to local commissioners in many communities along the route, and long before any effective use could be made of the canal, needless waste, inefficiency, embezzlement of funds, and fraud had taken heavy toll of the appropriations. The State had issued several hundred thousand dollars worth of bonds, many of which were purchased by foreign investors. These bonds were first sold to eastern banks and corporations who resold them, but failed to pay the state.

With the panic of 1837, work was stopped over the entire system. Very little had been accomplished, and as a consequence, interest could not be paid on the bonds. The investors employed Charles Butler, a New York attorney and incidentally, an Episcopalian minister, to try and persuade the state to make good on its obligations. The state had no funds for this purpose, but it was finally agreed that what tolls and income could be had from the operation of the canal would be divided between part payment on the interest due, and part to be applied on the operating expenses of the canal system. This never worked out very well, and the bond-holders finally recovered about forty cents on the dollar of their investment, and only a small part of the interest, which had remained unpaid.

A New Engineer.

Jesse Williams, first engineer on the Wabash & Erie Canal, and William J. Ball had married sisters, which probably explained the selection of Mr. Ball as the chief engineer to lay out and construct an extension of the canal from Lafayette to Terre Haute. This construction finally reached Terre Haute and on October 25, 1894, the canal packet, E. A. Hannegan and one other boat reached Terre Haute from Lafayette.

(Cont'd, Col. I next P.)

Early J. H. Cheered by Canal

Sunday, September 14, 1952.

Terre Haute Once Adorned Longest Canal In the Country

By A. R. Markle.

ACCIDENTS, according to the dictionary, are the result of unforeseeable events. But despite this definition, there are really no accidents which cannot be, in a post-mortem examination, seen to be the result of certain definite planning. Just as in a game of chess, every move from first to last is made after a choice of two or more possible moves and at the close of the game one can easily see, if not even sooner, just where the wrong move was made.

In the history of Terre Haute, many things have happened which were classed as accidents, which were plainly a result of someone making the wrong move. So it is not up to us, at this distance in time, to do more than simply record what happened.

One of the writer's earliest experiences was the explosion of the boilers of the old Wabash Distillery on New Year's Day, in 1879. In those days the fire alarm was signaled by the ringing of the bell at each engine house and when box 26 was indicated, a great many of our populace dropped their activities and went down to see what happened at the distillery. On this occasion the writer started from Twelfth and Walnut, heading for the scene of the fire, using all the possible short cuts to arrive there by the shortest distance and the quickest time. Part of this route took him through the grounds of the old Female College, now the site of St. Anthony's Hospital, which had then been vacant for many years. By cutting all possible corners, he arrived before the dead and injured had been removed from the ruins. There he saw, standing upright in the middle of the river, one of the large boilers. Plainly enough what had happened was hardly an accident but an explosion, due to low water in the boiler.

Other Collisions.

Many of the accidents which occur on our highway today, involve two or more motor vehicles traveling at high speed. The driver of the car is following another, let us say at the rate of sixty miles an hour, when the leading car slows down for a turn or a stop and the second car, traveling at the rate of nearly ninety feet per second, crashes into the other car with resulting damage. In another case two cars traveling at that speed in opposite directions can collide head-on at a speed of nearly one-hundred eighty feet per second, and it is almost a miracle there is not a fatal accident involved.

Yet this accident is certainly foreseeable, as one or both of these drivers is on the wrong side of the road or otherwise disobeying the traffic rules.

Accidental Drownings.

Here again unsafe practices have led to a death through violation of many safety rules. In every case, an examination of the circumstances, will plainly indicate the cause of the disaster.

The Wabash has seen many so-called accidents. One of these was when the steamboat, American Star, rammed the old wooden bridge at the foot of Ohio street. The resulting damage suit was venued to Putnam county, where a jury decided that this was no accident and awarded heavy damages to the bridge company. Another almost fatal case was on the occasion of a picnic party of a fraternal order which landed near Coal Creek and on disembarking, one of the members absent-mindedly got off the wrong side and fell into the river. Here, lying face down, he was seen by one of those already going up the bank. In the ensuing excitement, the member was dragged out of the water and after the water was drained out of his system, he was able to enjoy the festivity. In another case a large party and several boats, having pulled up the river by main strength of the oarsmen, had lashed the boats together for the return trip and the parties debarked on the floating platform of the boat yard, south of the Vandalia Bridge. One of the ladies of the party, having leaned too far over the river side of the platform, lost her balance and went down in the deep water. One man of the party heard the noise and looked around, saw nothing until she bobbed up out of the water. As bobbed hair had not become fashionable, he grasped her long locks and pulled her upon the platform, still living but soaking wet and hardly fit for publication.

Another near tragedy was narrowly averated. The wife of one of our prominent Irish citizens whose mind had become deranged, left her house in the middle of the night, fully dressed, and followed the Vandalia tracks out onto the bridge. Here she stepped off and dropped into the river, her descent probably slowed by the parachute effect of her many skirts which upheld her somewhat after the manner of the modern water wings. Calling wildly for help, the current carried her downstream under the old covered bridge, until someone in the neighborhood of the old distillery heard her cries and went out in a boat and brought her ashore.

Incidents In Early Days.

In April, 1888, a 20-year-old building of the State Normal school took fire during school hours and was almost completely destroyed. The pupils in the Normal, as well as the Training school, escaped without injury. Many other serious fires have been cronical from that early day when the Western Stage stables burned on Cherry street with the loss of all their horses. Then there was the fire in 1850 at the northeast corner of Third and Main streets and in 1889 the Havens and Geddes fire, at the northeast corner of Fifth and Main, which in loss of life and property, was our worst disaster and the tornado which swept through the southern part of the city at Easter time in 1913.

The railroads, too, had their troubles. Several cars of a freight train went down the embankment of the Big Four road, west of the river. One box car, loaded with shell corn, was demolished but a refrigerator car containing dressed turkeys provided several hundred dinners for those sight seers who arrived ahead of the sheriff's force. Then there was the spectacular collision on the Big Four bridge of two locomotives which met head-on, raised up in the air like two wrestlers and plunged into the river, locked in their embrace.

Some Coincidences.

In 1821 a state road was surveyed and later established between Indianapolis and Terre Haute and in 1827 the surveyors of the Cumberland Road arrived in Terre Haute and the road was finished through Terre Haute before 1835.

When the proprietors of the town laid it out in 1816, there were two extra wide streets, divided each eighty feet in width. One of these was Market street, runing north and south, which was logically intended to care for the traffic coming up from the land office in Vincennes in later days. But the same logic could not have been used for making Wabash street eighty feet wide, as at that time there was not even a remote possibility of the east and west traffic, which later came through it. So that it was only by coincidence that the surveyors of the National Road could fit their eighty foot highway into the width of Wabash street, without any difficulty.

At first sight it is difficult to see any reason for routing a telegraph line from Cincinnati to St. Louis, by way of Terre Haute, or bringing railroad traffic between those points to Terre Haute. In 1852 a passenger from Cincinnati boarded a train to Indianapolis and arriving at the first Union Station in the United States, boarded another train for Terre Haute and then changed cars for St. Louis. Another coincidence, entirely unexpected, arose from the desire of Terre Haute to meet the Wabash & Erie Canal at Point Commerce, on the White River near Worthington. The Wabash & Erie Canal was intended for operation between Maumee Bay to the mouth of Tippecanoe River. This terminal was later extended to reach Lafayette.

A branch line, known as the Central Canal left the Wabash near Peru and reached the White River, near Indianapolis and the short stretch of canal which still runs through Indianapolis.

Thus it happened that the canal was built along the Wabash from Lafayette to Terre Haute and this became a part of the Wabash & Erie, from Toledo to Evansville. This was the longest canal in America.

Indiana - Canals

Sunday, October 19, 1952.

The Mammoth Improvement Bill

By A. R. Markle.

Our early pioneers faced many difficulties that seem very small to us now. With the exception of the prairie lands on the western side of the state, the settler acquired his land at very little trouble or expense. In the central part of the state, dense forests covered much of the land and only with great trouble, hard work and money, could the land be brought under cultivation.

Immense tracts of valuable timber land were sacrificed before a crop could be planted. Some of this timber was saved for rail fences to enclose his land and more was used to erect his buildings. Not only was the timber needed to build his home, but his barns and other out buildings were usually rude log buildings.

For the home, after the logs were put in place and a protective roof laid, the spaces in the log walls had to be chinked to keep out the winter wind. Large chips of wood, even small slabs, were wedged between the logs and the whole lot bound together with mud plaster. No child was too small to help at this work while the older folks reaching higher, chinked the upper logs.

If a nearby source of stone was accessible, a great fire place would be provided at one end of the cabin. Usually this was built to care for a log four feet long and a back log of as large a diameter as could be rolled into place. In front of it, smaller logs supported on andirons, usually called fire-dogs, left a space below where the first fire was built of small material.

Clearing the Land.

Much of the timber was felled and burned on the spot and this provided room for the first planting. All other standing trees were ringed or girdled, which resulted in the death of the tree the following year. Often a crop could be raised among these trees, for as they stood bare they did not shade the ground, but as soon as possible these dead trees were felled and piled in huge heaps, where they burned night and day for weeks at a time.

Such small crops as could be raised in these first years, were easily consumed or were sold to the newcomers, until they could raise a crop of their own. But the newcomers soon had a surplus of their own, the local market failed entirely, unless a mill could be erected and the grain put in condition for transportation.

Then came the first real difficulty of the pioneer, for there were no roads or other means of transportation by which he could reach the market for his crops.

The State Steps In.

At the 1835-1836 session of the Legislature, an overwhelming demand for public improvements caused the passage of an act which would provide for transportation by means of turnpikes, railroads and canals.

The pressure for this bill came not only from the farmers, but from contractors who hoped for large earnings from construction; county officials, who hoped to gain benefits for their county; real estate speculators, who hoped to benefit from the increased value of the land and many others who had such personal reason for the adoption of the plan.

New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and part of New England had reaped immense wealth from such plans and certainly Indiana needed whatever help could be had for improved transportation.

Needless to say the feeling existed then, as it does today, whatever help could be had from the state, would be so much gained. Just where the money was to come from was given but little thought. The surplus wealth of the more prosperous eastern states and even far off Europe, would carry on the work and it was deemed certain that the financial returns from the operation of these improvements, would wipe out the costs, while the tolls to be charged would care for the operating expenses.

When The Bonds Fell Due.

The auditor of state, in his 1848 report, listed the following figures for the construction account: Jeffersonville and Crawfordsville turnpike, $339,183.78; Lafayette and Indianapolis turnpike, $73,142.87; Wabash Rapids, $14,288.42; White Water canal, $1,092,175.13; Madison and Indianapolis R. R., $1,624,603.05; Wabash and Erie canal, east of Tippecanoe, $3,055,268.97; Wabash and Erie canal, west of Tippecanoe, $1,245,290.54; Eel River Cross Cut canal, $436,189.88; Southern division of Central canal, $575,646.49; Wabash and Ohio canal, $9,169.94; New Albany and Vincennes turnpike, $696,516.47; Northern division of Central canal $882,088.93; Erie and Michigan canal, $160,708.87. The total expenditure was $10,204,273.34.

The Revenue Derived.

The total revenue received, according to his report, was as follows: Madison & Indianapolis, $85,436.68; Wabash & Erie canal east, $1,174,611.83; Wabash & Erie canal west, $526,847.61; New Albany & Vincennes road, $27,311.34; Northern division Central canal, $15,008.76. The total receipts was $1,829,216.22.

This dismal showing was largely the result of incomplete construction and in some cases, failure of the construction that had been finished. The railroad had only gotten as far as North Vernon and the later extension to Indianapolis was taken over by a private operator.

The canals were in some places in operation, but their successful operation depended on the whole system going into operation, for each division became a feeder for some other portion of the system. Many of the contractors failed to complete their work. Much of the money derived from the bonds was stolen or misapplied and the bond holders had become impatient for some return on their investment.

The White Water canal, for instance, was to connect the National Road in the eastern part of Indiana with Cincinnati, on the Ohio River and its trouble in construction and operation, was a fair example of the difficulties of the other canal. The Auditor's Report of 1848 stated that it will never bring any revenue, as it had been granted to a company and has suffered so much since by floods, and the cost of repairs remained so high that it would never pay its way. As an example, the high flood of January 1, 1847, carried away the aqueduct near Cambridge and that across the West Fork of White Water, at Laurel. The expense of making the repairs was estimated at $90,000. During the summer and fall of 1847, about $70,000 was expended and navigation had just commenced again, when another flood came on the 9th of November, and most of the repairs being incomplete, further damage was done, as estimated, to the amount of $80.000.

In the later history of the White Water canal there is no more hopeful note of the success of the entire project. Repeated damages required expensive repairs and even the private ownership was never wholly successful.

For many years, the only revenue came from the sale of power to various mills at Brookville and elsewhere. In recent years, private ownership by public utility, has produced some revenue from small electric stations along the route, but these are wholly dependent on the stage of the water.

Our Own Canals.

The original plan for the Wabash & Erie canal would have terminated at the mouth of the Tippecanoe River, but it was soon found advisable to extend to Lafayette, which would provide more certain connections with Wabash River steamboats, as well as derive considerable revenue from the sale of water power.

As Terre Haute was not included in this plan, an additional project was provided by another bill, and the Cross Cut Canal was built from here to the Eel, or White River, near Worthington. While it produced some profit, the dam which held back the water from Splunge and Birch Creeks, in Clay County, was destroyed by angry farmers. After its reconstruction, it was again demolished and without this supply of water for the summit level, operation had to cease on that line.

A later extension from Lafayette to Terre Haute, diverted traffic from a projected Central Canal, north of Indianapolis, so that through traffic from Toledo to Evansville, made use of the Cross Cut Canal.

By 1870 the impossibility of profitable operation of the system was apparent and finally abandoned.

Threatened Repudiation.

With the loss of expected revenue from the operation of the Wabash and Erie Canal, and the demand for payment by the bond holders, many of them Europeans, Indiana and the bond holders agreed to the appointment of a trustee, who would divide the expected receipts between the expense of operation and the payment of at least interest on the bonds, seemed the only way out. The trustee was an Episcopal minister named Butler. Despite all his efforts, the scheme failed. With the repeated cost of repairs caused by floods or other damage to the canal, and the loss of revenue due to accidental damages and delays in operation, Mr. Butler proposed to the state a plan, which was accepted by the bond holders, which at least returned to them, some of their own investment. With the acceptance of this offer, which verged very closely on the border of repudiation by the state of its contractual obligations, the whole affair was marked off as a loss. For a few years attempts were made by private organizations to operate certain sections of the canal, in return for what revenue could be derived. Aided by funds furnished by local merchants and others, it carried on for a short time, until the final end of the whole system.

Very little remains of the original project, though along the Maumee River, in Ohio, a few parts of the old canal have become public parks. Along the Wabash from Fort Wayne to Lafayette, the ruins of some of the old locks are still visible, and a part of one of the finest locks is still visible in this county, a little north of the town of Riley. While near that town, just a short distance north, some remnants of the old log locks still show signs of its activity.

To a certain extent, the old canal was a benefit to the state and its local communities. The higher payment received for agriculture products, due to easier transportation, the gain in real estate prices benefited some of the community, the easier cost of transportation afforded by the canal, for even short periods of time, increased the farmer's earnings and the value of his property. As a successful transportation system, however, it could be classed as a monumental failure.

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Assembly authorized canal in 1836

A failure, waterway still played key role in transportation

Historically speaking

Clark retired as The Tribune-Star's women's editor in 1980. She has written a local history column since 1956. She is Vigo County Historian.

By Dorothy J. Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

To aid in connecting the navigable waters of the Maumee and the Wabash rivers, Congress granted to the state of Indiana in 1827 a strip of land one-half of five sections wide on either side of the proposed Wabash & Erie Canal.

Spurred by the upper Wabash settlers who were handicapped by their lack of transportation, the Legislature accepted the grant from the federal government and agreed to build the canal.

This stupendous piece of engineering was authorized by a bill passed by the Legislature in 1836, when transportation was mandatory. The Wabash & Erie Canal followed rivers, going upstream on one, across country to the headwaters of another, and then downstream.

A board of three canal commissioners was appointed and instructed to employ engineers, locate the canal route, select land, lay off town sites, and work out a system of financing the job.

Indiana's unreadiness for such a project should have been painfully evident because the previous year's state tax levy had brought in only $33,000, which barely covered running expenses.

But the citizens cared little about that. Ohio, New York and everybody else were building successful canals. Why couldn't Indiana?

The newspapers deluged the public with articles on railroads and canals, and Indiana, poor as the proverbial church mouse, was determined to see the job through.

Excavation for the canal was done by hand shovelers mostly using one-horse, two-wheeled dump carts. In 1834, a thousand men were working on the Wabash & Erie Canal, mostly westward from Fort Wayne. These laborers were mostly Irish, divided as usual with equal numbers of Corkonians and Ulstermen.

The freight rate by canal boat from Toledo, Ohio, to Evansville was $5 a ton, but the tolls were still insufficient to pay repair bills. Two- or 3-year-old wooden aqueducts already were decaying.

The longest part of the canal followed the Wabash and passed through Fort Wayne, Logansport, Lafayette and Covington, then south to Terre Haute. From here it swung eastward to Worthington and Petersburg, and then on to its termination at Evansville.

In 1849, the first boats reached Terre Haute. This was an unfortunate season: first there was a flood, then an epidemic of cholera broke up construction gangs.

Canal boats were pulled by horses, with teams changed four times in 24 hours. Boats made 100 miles a day. It was a constant struggle to maintain a semblance of service, and freight delivery by this route was unreliable.

Evansville merchants complained that frequently they had to send teams and wagons up to some lonely spot along the route where the canal boat was stranded, in order to obtain a shipment of goods.

The Wabash & Erie Canal was never on a paying basis and never able to deliver satisfactory service. The year after its completion, in 1853, railroads began to operate. They gave so much better service that the backers of the canal lost their enthusiasm.

In 1857, trustees ordered any portion of the canal not paying expenses to be closed. All that portion below Terre Haute was closed immediately. By 1859 it was abandoned and only short local sections were in use for a few more years.

The canal was offered for lease to anyone who would keep it in repair for its use, and the last portion closed forever in 1860.

The Wabash & Erie Canal would appear to have been the most colossal, the most tragic failure in all canal history, but pitiful as it was, it played a tremendous part in the making of Indiana and the Midwest.

The 96-miles of the Illinois & Michigan Canal, connecting the Great Lakes with the Mississippi River system, brought vast quantities of grain and livestock to Chicago, and delivered heavy freight and supplies on the return trip.

This canal, which was put into operation in 1848, the same year the telegraph reached Chicago, started from the southern branch of the Chicago River and went across country, via the DesPlaines, mostly alongside the Illinois River, to the head of navigation at Peru.

The idea for it came from the fact Indians and early voyagers had portaged across from the Chicago River to the headwaters of the Illinois, making almost a continuous waterway from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico.

Construction of the canal, projected in 1827, and finally finished in 1848, cost $6,170,226. In its 96 miles from the Illinois River at Peru to the level of Lake Michigan, there was a rise of 145 feet, requiring 17 locks.

Community Affairs File

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Vigo County Historical Society

The Erie Canal and Some Changes It Made

T.H. Trib. 12/23/62

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

The opening of the Wabash & Erie Canal, to the north in 1849, and to Evansville in 1852, and even more, the telegraph in 1850, and the opening of the railroads, east, north, south and west, which followed in quick succession from 1852 on—inevitably changed things in Terre Haute.

The first of these, the opening of the canal to the north, was naturally a time for rejoicing. The WABASH COURIER of Sept. 8, 1849, says that water has been let into it and has come to within a mile and a half of the city.

In the issue of Oct. 27, we read that boats are now operating, two having started to load corn at Otter Creek, a few miles north. One of the first boats to reach town gave a crowd of people an excursion one mile and a half up the canal and back, accompanied by "band and music" from town. When they returned we are told they were greeted by the "roaring of cannon." At three o'clock a fine dinner was given at the Prairie House, to which the proprietors of the boat and other excursionists were invited. There were addresses, toasts, and the boats both returned north on the same day.

Dorothy J. Clark

There were several breaks in the canal soon after that, one of which delayed traffic for some time. Low water also interfered with the movements of boats, so that altogether it was not strange that the railroads, with their greater speed and certainty and their direct time to the eastern markets, soon made the canal unprofitable.

Nevertheless, for a liesurely trip, there might have been something to say for the canal boat. The arrival of the packet OHIO, Captain Davis, in May, 1850, was the occasion for the following in the COURIER:

"The OHIO is a fine boat and has one of nature's noblemen for commander. Everything appears in be in fine order on board, and the significant proportions of the captain strongly indicate the good cheer of the pantry. A number of gentlemen had more satisfactory evidence on this subject yesterday in the shape of an elegant dinner, to which they were invited, in the cabin. At four o'clock the OHIO took the party a few miles up the canal."

Describe Canal Boat.

A description of one of the canal boats is given by Mr. Beste on the occasion of his departure from Terre Haute in August, 1851:

"The construction of the canal boat was—in miniature—much the same as that of the lake and river steamers. There was no hold or underdeck, but on the deck, at the stern, were raised the kitchen, steward's room and offices.

"In the center of the boat was the large saloon—the sitting room of all by day, the sleeping room of the male passengers by night. Adjacent it was the ladies' saloon, beyond which again was a small cabin containing only four berths. This cabin was separated by a curtain from the ladies' saloon, and on the other side opened upon the bow of the vessel. In it was a looking glass, hand basin, two towels, a comb and brush, for the use of the ladies."

The starting of the boat is thus described:

"At five o'clock in the afternoon, we stepped from the little quay at Terre Haute on board the boat. Three horses were harnessed to a rope, about fifty yards ahead of the boat. They started at a moderate trot, and the town where we had tarried so long was soon lost to sight."

Trace Canal Course.

According to the map in the city directory of 1858, the course of the canal through the city was as follows: It entered from the north close to the river bank, at the eastern end of the present Big Four bridge. From here it went straight south along the river bank, where part of its course can still be followed, to the basin on Water street, just south of Eagle street. In its course, it passed through the west end of an old cemetery, just south of the Vandalia bridge, where a few badly broken tombstones were still to be seen for several years.

From the north end of the basin, just mentioned, it then went northeast to a point near the corner of Third and Chestnut, then straight north, on the west side of Third street, to Canal street, then straight east, where Vandalia tracks are at present. The present roadbed of the Vandalia tracks was laid on the tow path of this section of the Wabash & Erie Canal.

In front of where the Union Station used to be, it curved around and went south between Ninth and Tenth streets, up the present alley, to about Ohio street, then angled southeast out of the city towards Riley (then called Lockport).

The basin and docks at Terre Haute were said to be the finest on the whole canal, having steps leading down to the landing and a railing. Of all this activity there are hardly any traces left some one hundred and ten years later.

Many Thanks.

I want to thank all my readers for the many lovely Christmas cards I have received. Since next Tuesday is Christmas Day, I would send this blessing to all of you:

God bless the master of this house, the mistress, also,
And all the little children that round the table go;
And all your kin and kinsfolk, that dwell both far and near;
I wish you a Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year.

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Community Affairs File

WABASH AND ERIE CANAL

THE TERRE HAUTE STAR, THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 1970.

City Engineer Hunts Owners Of Clinton's Ditch

By JOE WAGNER
Star Staff Writer

The ghost of the old Wabash and Erie Canal that flourished in Terre Haute about 1850 haunted City Engineer John T. Byrne and members of his staff Wednesday.

Byrne said his department is attempting to determine ownership of a strip of land from 80 to 100 feet wide and approximately 800 feet long located on the east side of the Milwaukee Road yards near Fifteenth and Hulman Streets.

+ + +

The old canal was located on the property and the city now must determine ownership in order to procure an easement for construction of a Hulman Street intersector sewer.

Byrne said the property originally was charged to the U. S. Trust Co., but was transferred to the Terre Haute First National Bank in 1927, with the bank named as trustee.

Byrne said assets of the property, which apparently never has appeared on tax rolls, were liquidated in Vigo Probate Court in 1962.

+ + +

According to Byrne, both the Terre Haute First National Bank and the Milwaukee Road have been cooperative in attempting to determine ownership and title to the property. He said his office has spent about five days trying to locate persons who might claim ownership to the land.

The old canal entered the city from the north at Locust Street near the Wabash River, then went to a turn-basin and lock near Second and Chestnut Streets.

Then, a 15-foot lift through the locks took the canal boats north to Canal Street, where the canal turned east to Seventh Street and then south along Ninth and One-Half Street, where it went southeast to Riley and a reservoir, before continuing on to Evansville.

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Water dispute bred Cross Cut conflicts, reservoir vandalism

Community Affairs File

AUG 18 1985

Canals (Ind)

Historically speaking

Clark is Vigo County's official historian and formerly worked for The Terre Haute Tribune.

By Dorothy Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

Real trouble came to the Wabash & Erie Canal in 1854 when Clay County residents near The Cross Cut — which connected Terre Haute to Toledo, Ohio, from roughly 1851 to 1861 — objected to their land being inundated with water.

The water created an unhealthy condition, a breeding place for mosquitoes which spread malaria — although the cause of the disease was still unknown at that time. The early settlers believed the rotting tree stumps and vegetation caused a fever to rise from the stagnant water and caused the illness of that day. The people still resented not being paid for the timber cut off their land.

Oct. 19, 1854, Governor Wright issued a proclamation and offered a $500 reward for the arrest of anyone caught "attempting to damage or destroy the Wabash & Erie Canal by firing the weirs, locks, dams and other combustible works, cutting the embankments, etc."

This did not stop the trouble, which became more serious in the spring and summer of 1855. On May 10, about 100 men cut the embankment of Birch Creek Reservoir so completely that most of the water was let out. These armed men, disguised with blackened faces, were properly led by a drum and fife corps carrying the Stars and Stripes. The guards who had been stationed there for some time were driven off at gunpoint.

One of the canal trustees, Thomas Dowling of Terre Haute, reported to the governor that navigation was suspended on the canal south of Terre Haute for three months, causing financial loss in repairs and to those having capital invested in boats and produce. Although the repairs were made promptly, no rain fell to fill the reservoir, and the water level in the canal remained too low for boat traffic until the fall rains set in.

Wright ordered two militia companies sent to the trouble spot. Young single men enlisted for a dollar a day under the command of Vanderburgh County Sheriff John S. Gavell.

Sometime in June 1855 the militia arrived at the Junction where it was divided into two groups. About 15 men remained camped there to protect the lower reservoir, while about 50 men marched on up to Birch Creek where they occupied two old canal boats.

They spent most of their time fishing, chasing ducks, playing cards and shooting at a mark with the Clay Countians. Observing the Clay County riflemen knock a dime out of a forked stick at a distance of 20 paces at every shot, militiamen were in no hurry to get involved in a shooting fracas. They figured getting shot at was worth more than a dollar a day.

About 10 days later the militia were evacuated and sent to Terre Haute where they were "appropriately banqueted, and under the influence of champagne, became patriotic, made speeches and recited all their deeds of valor."

Whether right or wrong, the people of Clay County believed the feeder dams to be nuisances, which they had the right to abate in self-protection. A subsequent decision of the Supreme Court on the controversy almost justified them in cutting the banks.

The troubles and litigation, coupled with the rapid construction and operation of the railroads, led to the neglect and gradual decay of the canal interests. A few years later the Canal Co. abandoned interest in Clay County.

Paul Fatout in his book "Indiana Canals" writes, "A detached observer can only puzzle over the strange spectacle of supposedly law-abiding citizens, including this time at least one member of the state assembly, taking the law into their own hands, advocating disorder and, obstinately rejecting compromise, deliberately injuring their neighbors and themselves."

Telling how the lower line of the canal "suffered from the anarchy of nature and of man, divisions above Terre Haute were also more disturbed than serene. Grass grew so lushly that two marine mowers with 12 scythes could scarcely keep it down. Like a householder's lawn, the canal had to be shorn half a dozen times a summer. Once cut, the stuff created a new problem by lodging in lock gates, preventing their fitting tightly and causing a leakage of water, of which there was seldom an ample supply for both shippers and mill owners."

The so-called Clay County "Regulators" were just one blight on the Wabash & Erie Canal's prospects. In 1857 the rebels cut the bank at Eel River. Below Terre Haute bushes and briers clogged the unused towpath, which for weeks on end showed never a hoofprint of a towing mule. The next year was worse, and the Clay County Regulators dismantled the Birch Creek Aqueduct and managed to stop what little traffic there was. Two years later Dowling farmed out portions of the canal to responsible parties, and the slow death of the canal took place between 1860 and 1874. The land was finally sold at auction, and railroads took over the canal bed and towpaths.

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River water — and firewater, too

How they dug the Wabash & Erie

TS FEB 4 1979

Historically Speaking

By Dorothy Clark

The construction of the Wabash & Erie Canal, and the hopes and ambitions the enterprise aroused, the failures and disappointments experienced, is all a part of the history of the Wabash Valley.

Along the meandering course of the canal, several towns were located, and there was quite a demand for town lots, the price of real estate in the vicinity of the canal route materially increasing.

Some of these towns were laid out on a large scale; several houses were built, including stores, and small industries of various kinds were established. During the short time the canal was in operation, some of the towns became extensive shipping points for grain and produce, and the merchants located there enjoyed a large trade from the surrounding country.

But all the bright prospects and promising financial investments went glimmering when the canal failed. The site of some of these once flourishing towns is now hardly a memory. The thousands of dollars expended by the different counties in the canal project was compensated, in some measure, however, by the bringing in of a large immigration and the consequent development of the material resources of the counties.

The amount of labor and patient energy expended in the digging of the canal is a wonder to the present age. That was before the day of the diesel-powered earth-movers and other modern machinery for such work, and all excavating work was done by pick and shovel.

Irish laborers were mostly employed for this work, as they were the most expert in handling the implements used. The dirt was loaded into a wheelbarrow, or a dump cart drawn by a mule, and carried to the place of dumping. The plow and scraper were used to some extent by a few of the contractors; but most of the work in the construction of that great ditch was the slow process outlined above.

A very important and necessary job was that of the "jigger boy," second only to the paymaster with the canal diggers. The "jigger" was about two swallows of whiskey, and the number of "jiggers" that a contractor would give a day to his employees was as important a consideration as the amount of money he would give for labor.

One dollar per day was the usual pay, and the number of "jiggers" was fixed by agreement, five to ten a day being the usual allowance. It was not unusual for a contractor who was short of hands to increase the number of daily "jiggers" over the allowance by other contractors. This increase brought the contractor all the hands he needed.

It was the duty of the "jigger boy" to see that the agreed number and specified amount was delivered on time. Contractors bought whiskey by the barrel, at about 20 cents per gallon, so the "jigger" was not an expensive luxury in those times.

After the canal was completed, many of the Irish emigrants had saved up enough money to buy land and bring over their families, if they had not already done so.

Laborers lived in rude shanties, sometimes cooking their own meals. Others obtained meals from boarding houses that were established at every "dump." The rations usually consisted of bread, potatoes, and plenty of black coffee, sweetened with molasses. Meat was on the menu about once a week. The laborers received their wages every three months. Pay day was the occasion for a holiday, in which drunks and fights were the principal amusements.

In most cases, the contractors had one section each, and these sections, as a rule, were a mile long. Where the sections required heavy work they were made shorter, in order that the work might all be completed about the same time.

The embankments were made by hauling the dirt in one-horse carts. The usual outfit for a crew of men, where the haul was not over 200 yards, was four carts and four men to each cart to shovel in the dirt. The work was so timed that the loaded cart was ready to pull out as soon as an empty cart was returned to be loaded. Over each squad of 40 men there was a boss; usually the most

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portant man on the works, the boss no opportunities escape to magnihis office.

There were no restrictions then on e sale of intoxicating liquor. hiskey was as free as water, and ten more easily obtained than wa-r. There was great opportunity for rofitable business in setting up a grocery" or "doggery," as drinking laces were called, in the vicinity of e canal works.

A board shanty and a barrel of hiskey was all the preparation necssary to equip a business place of his kind. As a rule, contractors obected to establishments of this kind because of the demoralizing effects among their employees, and they would not permit whiskey joints to remain within their jurisdiction.

The canal followed the water-level of rivers as far as practicable. In many places the fall was so great that it was necessary to build locks in order to secure a new water-level.

The locks were made of sufficient length to accomodate the largest boats, and were about 18 feet wide. The material used was heavy hewn timber, with very heavy double gates at each level. American laborers were employed in the building of locks, culverts and construction work where timber was required. Irish skill was better adapted to the handling of a shovel than the broadaxe.

The canal was tested upon completion by letting in the water to discover if there were any leaks. Boats began running in the early 1850s as soon as sections were completed and continued until 1860s, when navigation was suspended and the canal was practically abandoned except for a few short sections under local control due to railroad competition. The motive power was mules, two or more mules being hitched tandem for the heavy freighters. Horses were used in some sections of the towpath.

Calm on the river: Days of Wabash and Erie Canal are gone

Few traces remain of canal life along river years ago

JUL 18 1983

Wabash Valley and Erie Canal

By Dave Delaney
Tribune-Star State Editor

Long departed are those who witnessed canal life in the Wabash Valley where horses and mules pulled barges heavily-laden with goods bound for market.

It's been 140 years to the month that the famed, but in this area short-lived, Wabash and Erie Canal opened this area to Eastern markets for the sale of Hoosier produce.

"The canal linked Indiana with Toledo, Lake Erie and the Erie Canal," said Donald F. Carmony, Indiana University professor emeritus of history.

It meandered by Terre Haute, Riley and Black Hawk on its way to Evansville and the Ohio River.

"The canal was very important to Terre Haute," said Indiana State University professor William W. Giffin. Although the boats moved at a relatively slow 4 miles per hour, they moved tons of goods on their way to the lucrative Eastern markets.

"It would've been impossible to pull all that weight overland," said Giffin. "They would've needed 20 mules to pull just a fraction of the weight the boats did."

Traces of the canals are few these days. The canal ran along the banks of the Wabash River northwest of Terre Haute near where the Elks Club is today. It's long been filled in by dirt. However, one can see the indentation where it passed in this area.

"The canals were made about 4 to 5 feet deep," explained Giffin. "They had earthen walls with a levy on either side." The ISU professor said it was always difficult maintaining the canals, but feels they were "a magnificent achievement of engineering" for their time.

The canals were used from 1832 to the 1870s, said Giffin, with the Indiana section under construction two decades. But technology soon replaced them.

"It didn't take long before the railroads took their business and took them out of competition," Giffin said. However, parts of the canals were still used regionally after the railroads became entrenched.

"The canal boatmen were romantic figures," said the ISU professor. "They were heroes for boys of the time."

Carmony said the pioneers were enthusiastic with the canal because it was cheaper to transport large amounts of goods by canal barge.

"It meant they (Hoosiers) could purchase imports cheaper and sell their wares at a lower, more competitive price," he said.

The IU and ISU professors have differing views on the canal's effectiveness in Indiana.

Carmony said, "For all practical purposes the canal was never useful below Terre Haute."

But Giffin disagrees.

"That's not accurate from what I know about it," he said. "The canal connected with Evansville on the Ohio River, giving through traffic to the area for moving goods."

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Canal packet afforded pleasant travel

Community Affairs File

NOV 22 1992

Canals (IN) - SPC File

Continuing the saga of the Wabash & Erie Canal.

Traveling by canal packet was pleasant and picturesque. Travelers neither knew great speed or wanted to experience today's frantic traveling. During the days spent on deck of the smoothly gliding packets, new friendships happened, games were played, music enjoyed, and even romances begun.

The best packets made eight miles an hour, and the driver kept his tandem team of three on a sharp trot, changing the horses often along the route. As towns were approached, the mellow notes from the horn announced arrival. If it was a way station, passengers could alight and seek out refreshments at the local tavern, tarrying until the warning horn sounded all aboard.

The canal offered a closeup view of the countryside that later was advertised as one of the charms of travel by automobile and interurban. It wound through farms, fields, meadows, through long stretches of dense forest, affording views of hills and valleys and far-stretching prairies.

The government recognized the value of the route by the Wabash and Maumee by securing the portage between the two rivers in the Ordinance of 1787 as a common highway free from any tax or duty, making it a national roadway.

It was the middle of the 19th century before Terre Haute witnessed the completion of the Wabash & Erie Canal, but the ideas at the foundation of such improvements date back to the confederated colonies. Washington suggested a canal to connect Lake Erie and the Potomac in 1784. He prophesied the connection of Lake Erie with the Mississippi River.

The original plan of making the terminus of the Wabash & Erie Canal at Terre Haute soon was discouraged, because the Wabash River was not navigable at all seasons of the year up to this point.

The decreasing volume of the Indiana rivers caused by the removal of the forests and the breaking of the soil and subsoil drainage, causing the rapid drainage of rainfall, already was observed by 1830 and 1840.

Indiana began plunging into the improvements by starting all of the schemes at once. Public confidence was high, and the market was flooded with bonds. The price of labor, provisions and material exceeded estimates. Most of the bonds were sold on credit.

With the series of failures that marked the Panic of 1837, the Morris Canal & Banking Co. of New York, holders of a large portion of the canal bonds, went into bankruptcy, owing the state more than $2 million for bonds it had purchased on credit.

Altogether, the state lost more than $3 million for bonds sold on credit. The canal had been completed as far as Logansport in 1838, but in the following year the whole system of public improvements was paralyzed. Efforts to complete the work were suspended.

In 1840 the state debt was more than $13 million, of which more than $9 million was for internal improvements. Only 202 miles of canal and two short railroad lines, yielding altogether an income of $31,000 annually, were actually completed at that time.

Interest-bearing notes were issued for a $1.5 million to meet the balances due contractors. In the following year, an issue of bonds could not be sold. Land scrip and treasury notes were issued, receivable for canal tolls and water rents on the Wabash & Erie Canal, and many expedients were tried and failed.

Some of the work was abandoned, some was sold to private companies, but the Wabash & Erie remained a state enterprise until its completion. In 1843, the canal as far as Lafayette was earning $60,000 a year. The following year a disastrous flood closed it to general use, and it never became a profitable route.

In this period of embarrassment that affected other states as well as Indiana, there was a demand that the payment of interest be stopped, and that the debt resulting from bonds sold on credit, and for which the state never received payment, should be repudiated.

Repudiation became the point over which the fiercest political and economic controversy of that period was waged. Settlement began in Michigan in 1842.

The matter was settled by Indiana in Terre Haute in 1845. State credit was strengthened, and the stigma of repudiation and financial dishoner was forever removed. The canal was placed in the hands of Charles Butler and Thomas H. Blake, and they took possession on July 1, 1847, with offices at Terre Haute.

Jesse Williams of Fort Wayne was chief engineer, and W.J. Ball of Terre Haute was resident engineer. The canal was opened to Evansville in the spring of 1853, for a total of 458 miles. It had been completed to Covington in 1845, to Coal Creek in 1847, and to Terre Haute in 1849.

The first line boat arrived in Terre Haute in June 1850, carrying canal officials and prominent citizens who celebrated the occasion.

The most prosperous years of the canal were 1847-56. Tolls and rents during the best year, 1852, were $193,400, but declined steadily. By 1874, income fell to $7,179 due to railroad competition.

In 1858, holders of canal certificates petitioned to abandon the canal south of Terre Haute and sell canal lands. During 1859-60, a part of the canal still was operated by private parties. By 1862, it was closed south from Terre Haute.

The canal closed in 1874 and rapidly fell into complete ruin. A fiscal summary shows a loss of $3 million.

Historically speaking

Clark retired as The Tribune-Star's women's editor in 1980. She has written a local history column since 1956. She is Vigo County Historian.

By Dorothy J. Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

to trains

Leisure of canal boat gave way

Ts AUG 2 3 1987

Canals (In) - SPC File

Historically speaking

Clark retired as The Tribune-Star women's editor in 1980. She has written a local history column for 30 years. She is Vigo County Historian.

By Dorothy J. Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

The opening of the Wabash & Erie Canal to Terre Haute from the north in 1849, and to Evansville in 1852, inevitably changed things in the city.

On Sept. 8, 1849, according to the Wabash Courier, the water was let into the new canal from the north, and it was within a mile and a half from the city.

By Oct. 27 boats were operating. Two were loading corn at Otter Creek a few miles north of town. One of the first boats to reach here gave a crowd of people an excursion nearly two miles up the canal north and back, accompanied by band music and much hilarity.

When they returned, they were greeted by the roaring of cannon. At three o'clock, a fine dinner was enjoyed at the Prairie House by all the boat proprietors and others on the excursion. There were speeches and toasts before both boats returned north that evening.

Soon after that happy event, there were several breaks in the canal. Traffic was delayed for some time. Low water also interfered with the movement of boats, so that it was not strange that the railroads, with their greater speed and certainty and their direct times to the eastern markets, soon made the canal profitable.

The railroads — east, north, south and west — opened in quick succession from 1852 on. The telegraph in 1850 speeded both types of transportation through the Terre Haute area.

For a leisurely trip, there was much in favor of the canal boat. The packet "Ohio" with Captain Davis arrived here in May 1850. It was reported by the newspaper to be "a fine boat and has one of nature's noblemen for commander.

"Everything appears to be in fine order on board, and the significant proportions of the captain strongly indicate the good cheer of the pantry. A number of gentlemen had more satisfactory evidence of this subject in the shape of an elegant dinner, to which they were invited in the cabin. At four o'clock the "Ohio" took the party a few miles up the canal."

Mr. Beste gave an excellent description of a canal boat in his journal when he left Terre Haute in August 1851.

"The construction of the canal boat was, in miniature, much the same as that of the lake and river steamers. There was no hold or underdeck, but on the deck, at the stern, were raised the kitchen, steward's room and offices.

"In the center of the boat was the large saloon, the sitting room of all by day, the sleeping room of the male passengers by night. Adjacent it was the ladies' saloon, beyond which again was a small cabin containing only four berths.

"This cabin was separated by a curtain from the ladies' saloon, and on the other side opened upon the bow of the vessel. In it was a looking glass, hand basin, two towels, a comb and brush, for the use of the ladies."

At five o'clock in the evening, the Beste family party stepped from the little quay at Terre Haute on board the boat. Three horses were harnessed to a rope, about 50 yards ahead of the boat. They started at a moderate trot, and the town . . . was soon lost to sight.

The Wabash & Erie Canal entered Terre Haute from the north close to the river bank, at the eastern end of the present Big Four bridge. From here it went straight south along the river bank to the basin on Water Street, just south of Eagle Street. In its course it passed through the west end of the Old Indian Orchard Cemetery, just south of the present Vandalia bridge.

From the north end of the turning basin it went northeast to a point near the corner of Third and Chestnut streets, then straight north, on the west side of Third Street, to Canal Street, then straight east, where the railroad tracks are at present. The roadbed of the tracks was laid on the tow path of this section of the canal.

In front of where the Union Station used to be, it curved around and went south between Ninth and Tenth streets up the present alley, to about Ohio Street, then angled southeast out of the city towards Riley, then called Lockport.

The basin and docks at Terre Haute were said to be the finest on the whole canal, having steps leading down to the landing, and a hand railing. Of all this activity, there are hardly any traces left, some 135 years later.

The remains of the stone locks at Riley still are visible. North of town, the old towpath of the canal still is very evident at the Elks Club and the site of historic Fort Harrison.

T. H. Capitol
Nov 13, 49

Recalling The Days When Crops Here Were Moved On Canal Boats

READERS SERVICE
VERTICAL FILE

By A. R. Markle.

Indiana became a state in 1816. Twenty-five years later it almost went bankrupt. In the early thirties of the last century it chartered a banking system composed of a Central Bank and thirteen branches. This was a financial success. It paid a profit of ten to twelve per cent each year. At the expiration of its charter in 1858 it declared a dividend of 100 perfent to its stockholders. Its value to the state was tremendous and its notes were received at par from the Atlantic seaboard to the Gulf. But the state still suffered from a lack of transportation facilities. In 1837 the General Assembly passed the "Mammoth Improvement Bill," intended to build a railroad from Madison on the Ohio river to Indianapolis and another from New Albany to Lafayette. At the time the only communication from Indianapolis was the new Cumberland Road, a federal project, planned to connect the state capitals of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri and the Mexican city of Santa Fe with Washington. The Madison railroad was to be given up by the state and completed by private ownership. The projected railroad from New Albany to Lafayette became a turnpike. The greater part of the improvement bill was allocated to the building of a canal. The canal actually went on to successful operation.

Wabash & Erie Canal.

Planned to run from Maumee Bay at Toledo, to the head of navigation on the Wabash, it ascended beside the Maumee river to Defiance, Ohio, and the state line under the financing by the State of Ohio. That state built a canal of its own from Defiance to Cincinnati which was still in operation at the turn of the century. From the state line to Fort Wayne it used water from the Maumee and its tributaries. From Fort Wayne to the mouth of the Tippecanoe its water supply came from the tributaries of the Wabash. It was found that navigation of the Wabash above Lafayette was uncertain and the canal aws extended to the latter city. An added feature was to be the Central Canal to extend from the Main Line through Indianapolis. An insufficient supply of water at the summit level halted this plan and only the Broad Ripple dam and the portion of the canal there was ever finished.

On To Eel River.

As the Wabash failed to afford steamboat traffic in the summer, Terre Haute secured a charter for the Cross Cut Canal to reach the Central Canal at Point Commerce near Worthington on the White river. Work was started on this in 1839. The collapse of the Improvement Project killed the plan for a time. River traffic from Lafayette was uncertain at the time of the greatest need and the main canal was planned and completed to Terre Haute in 1842. The success of canal traffic brought a revival of interest in the Cross Cut Canal. Work was reumed and it was finally completed to Point Commerce in 1850. To reach the high ground of the Clay County level, a series of locks was constructed between the basin at Terre Haute and the summit east of Riley, then called Lockport, with a total drop of sixty feet to the level of the prairie. The canal from the north entered Terre Haute a little west of Water street and extended a short distance beyond Chestnut street. It entered the Basin where there was space enough to turn around for the return trip north. The banks of the Basin were lined by warehouses and elevators and a short stub of the line almost to Cherry street cared for the shipments from the pork packing houses. The Cross Cut Canal entefed along a route now occupied by the Milwaukee Road. At Crawford street it turned northerly to Sycamore street and ran along what was later called Canal street. Then by a long curve across what is now the park of the Union Station, it ran west along the ground now the right of way of the Pennsylvania Railroad. At Tihrd street it turned south in what is now an alley west of Third to reach the Basin where the Growers' Market is now located. The crossing of Chestnut caused the offset in Second street so noticeable now. Between the alley and Third street, now the site of the Temple Laundry, were the dry docks where boats were built or repaired. Here was the lock of the Cross Cut System. This had its own basin, north of Wabash avenue, where the Hulman Building stands and this was low enough to allow boats to pass under the bridge on the National road, now Wabash avenue. Like all others of those days this was a covered bridge. The water here come from Eel river whose Feeder Dam is still a well-known point in Clay county. The first of this water reached Terre Haute on May 1, 1850.

The Old Reservoir.

As the greatest demand on the canal was at harvest time when both the Wabash and the Eel rivers were at their lowest point, it was necessary to provide for water at the summit level. For this purpose a high embankment was constructed east of Cory to impound the waters of Splunge and Birch creeks and this stored water over a thousand or more acres of land in Clay county. Flooding of this land killed the vegetation and the dead trees were blamed for the prevalence of that early plague of the Wabash country, "Fevernager," or malaria. So great was the sickness and so firm this belief that the residents of the vicinity of the reservoir finally broke the dike and released the water. This stopped the operation of the necessary line in the system. State Militia Companies were called to protect the repairs. When they were completed, the militia retired after a long summer camp with fishing, swimming, gambling and drinking. The dike was again broken by the neighbors. The water again wasted and a whole season of traffic lost.

The entire system of the Wabash & Erie Canal with its branches was a gigantic failure, a loss of millions of dollars by fraud and unwise administration. But during its short life its benefits to the state and the people, in cost of transportation, increased prices for the products of the farm and factory, far outweighed the losses, tremendous as they were. The entire length of the canal from Toledo to Evansville made it one of the longest in the world.

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Community Affairs File

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Wabash And Erie Canal Proved Benefit To Early Terre Haute

T.H. Tribune 1-16-49

By A. R. Markle.

Financially the Wabash & Erie canal was a dismal failure, but the net result to the state in growth of population, increase in the value of the land that the government had to sell and the great gain to industry and agriculture through better and cheaper transportation was enough to justify the terrible expense to the state, not only in money but in its credit standing. However a delay of three or four weeks in delivery of farm product to the east or of the industrial products from the east to Indiana brought a demand for speedier transportation by rail. The canal boat made about four miles an hour at best, but there were rumors that in the east the Iron Horse could make fifteen miles an hour without ill effects on passengers or freight.

The Need For Capital.

When the state built the right of way and all one needed to do was to furnish the boat and the mules, little capital was needed but when to build and grade a place for the rails and to bridge a stream cost more than a score of boats and a locomotive cost more than a hundred mules it was realized that building a railroad cost real money. Small wonder then that Chauncey Rose, popularly called the builder of the Terre Haute and Richmond, had to raise large sums for planning and construction, he had trouble raising money among his friends and business associates and that from time to time the concern was on the ragged edge of failure. The survey from Indianapolis ended according to the newspaper of the day "in Mr. Rose's cornfield east of the canal."

First Annual Report.

January 9, 1850, Mr. Rose reported to his stockholders that the board had appointed Captain Morris to make a survey between Indianapolis and Terre Haute which was completed Dec. 1, 1847, and the estimate of the two routes' cost resulted in his being employed nearly a year later, to make another survey along the southern route between Greencastle and Terre Haute. This was started Sept. 10, 1848, and on Dec. 20 a contract was let for grubbing, grading and clearing and the building of a stone pier and two stone abutments of a bridge at Reels Mill on Walnut Fork of White river. This work covered about 32 miles at the west end of the line. This contract run about 6 per cent under the engineer's estimate and about 33 per cent of the payment was to be made in stock. The greater part of the right of way was paid for in stock also but in at least one instance the owner would take only cash and Mr. Rose reported in that case he was compelled to buy about ninety acres for which he had to pay $500 but he found a valuable stone quarry on the land worth all he paid for it as it would furnish all the stone needed for culvert, bridges and buildings for the road. The owner had asked $250 for the right of way and got $500 for the land.

More Real Estate.

In addition to land acquired for the road five acres were had for depots at Indianapolis and Terre Haute at no expense to the company and for machine shops at Indianapolis five acres were bought for $1,000 payable in two years with interest. In his opinion the entire cost of the right of way would run to only between five and seven thousand dollars.

East End Construction.

Contracts for work on the east end from Greencastle to Indianapolis were let December 20, 1849, at about 2½ per cent under the engineer's estimate, and this left a small bit of the work still to be contracted for due to abandonment by the contractors and this 20 miles would cost a little more than $53,000. Anticipated increased stock sales would furnish funds for the work to be done the coming spring. The Reelsville bridge pier and abutment had not been finished but when the work was expected to be done the road would be ready for the superstructure of ties, ballast and bridges. It was estimated that the total cost of clearing, grubbing and grading would amount to $317,288 for which there was on hand $166,756 and an expected subscription from the Vigo County Commissioners of $50,000. Of the $130,000 needed to complete the roadbed, at least 30 per cent can be expected to be paid for in stock. Assurance was given that the rolling stock, rails, etc., could be had by the issuance of the company's bonds secured by a mortgage. The report closes with the statement that receipts had been at that time, $103,365.69 and the expenses $102,911.12 with a cash balance of $473.99. A pencil and paper may show that these figures do not agree, but if the stockholders did not object, why should we?

Amendments to the Charter.

The original charter was granted Jan. 26, 1847, but long before work was started it was amended in several particulars. February 16, 1848, the company was allowed to start at any point and construct such parts as they saw fit. They might run their line within a half mile of Greencastle courthouse and if the line did not go through Danville the stockholders in Hendricks county might relinquish their stock and be relieved of their obligations. At least four directors must reside east of Indianapolis. January 13, 1849, another amendment provided for forfeiture of stock if two calls for payments failed to bring the money, the line might be within a mile of the courthouse at Greencastle and the company might own 640 acres for timber. Then on January 21, 1850, the name was changed to the Terre Haute & Richmond R.R. Co. and Vigo county was authorized to give $50,000 for stock. January 8, 1851, an act was passed over the veto of the governor to authorize the company to issue bonds to complete the road and buy equipment.

Twelve days later the company was allowed to separate the road at Indianapolis and terminate the west end at Indianapolis and those stockholders east of that city were to become the Indiana Central R. R. Co. and proceed with all convenient speed toward the Ohio state line in the general direction of the National Road. Then on February 11, 1851, the road chartered by Illinois could extend its line into Indiana to meet the Terre Haute and Richmond road at Terre Haute including power to bridge the Wabash. The original charter of the Richmond road required it to build to the Illinois line and this provision was carried out twenty years later.

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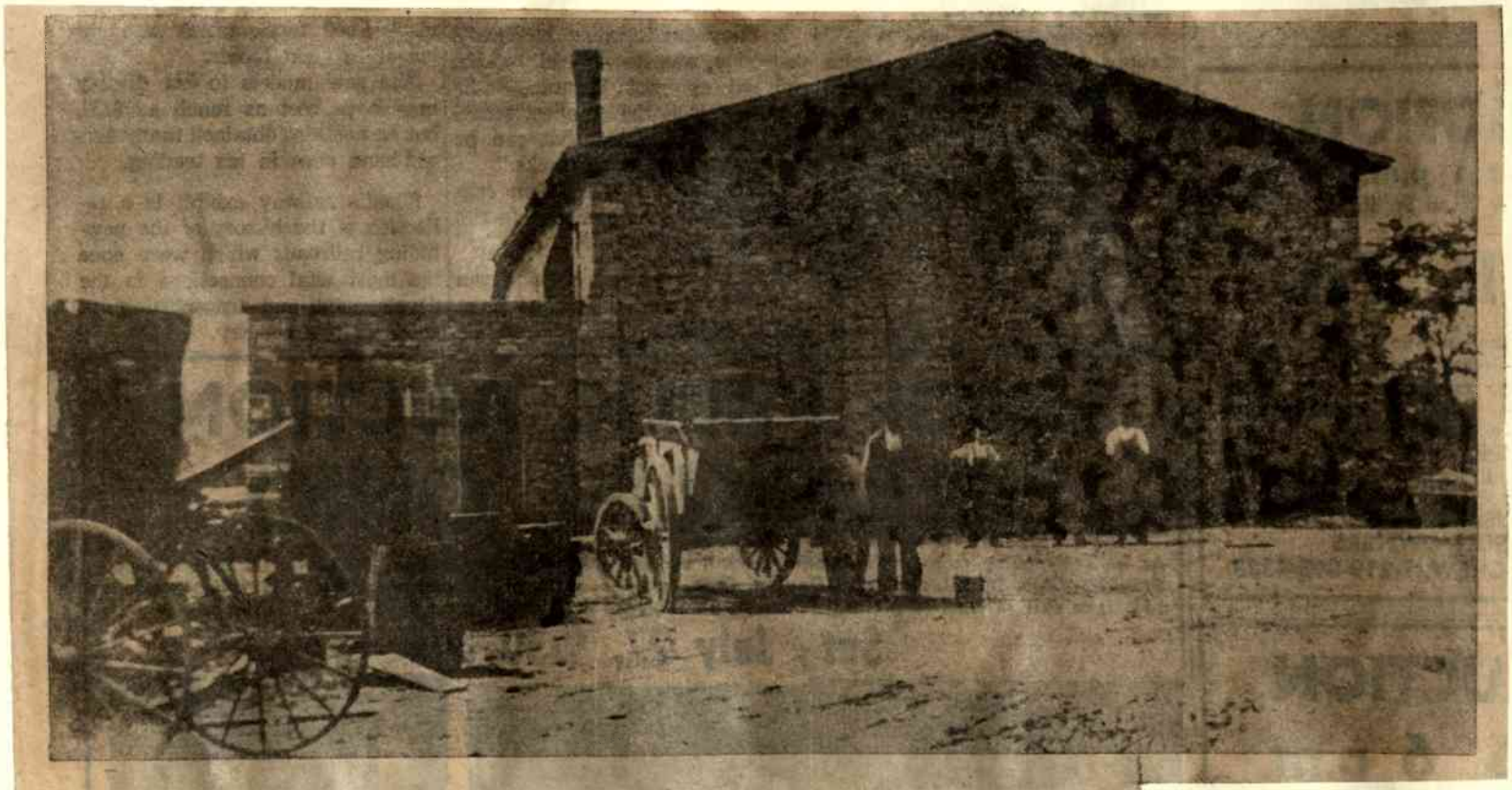

THE HISTORIC PIERCE Barn, a stone structure built in 1896 at Delphi, Ind, will be the first restoration in that city's canal reclamation project. The barn will be refur-

Canal Restoration Project Underway At Delphi, Ind.

Wabash and Erie Canal Tri-State Trader 7-27-74

by SALLY KING

A series of restorations encompassing historic attractions in the area of the old Wabash and Erie Canal at Delphi, county seat of Carroll County, Ind. has been initiated by a group of citizens in that area, working under the title of the Carroll Co. Wabash & Erie Canal, Inc. (Delphi is 17 miles northeast of Lafayette.)

The reclamation will include landscaping, cleaning, and general renovation of the canal as well as the restoration of buildings along the route.

The group envisions the construction of a recreational area and park along the canal banks, with bike trails, walking paths, shops and areas for boating and canoeing.

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Project Began Last Summer

The project began last summer, when the Delphi, Chamber of Commerce instigated interest. A banquet was staged, at which time the originators of the project received pledges of service from 75 persons. At this time, a committee was selected to set up the details of the project.

The organization was set up as a non-profit corporation with 15 directors.

The association is currently preparing a work description for the project, and a representative of the National Guard at Delphi has expressed interest in furnishing men and equipment for the cleaning of the brush and debris from the canal. Dean Overholser, president of the Canal Corporation, states that the project has widespread community support and is serving as a major community action project at Delphi, which was founded in 1827 a mile east of the Wabash River, on Deer Creek.

The area of the canal to be cleared is 100 feet, wide and 4,000 feet [illegible], Overholser says. He indicated that the organization has begun to locate names of owners along the canal area and is now obtaining easements and legal consent. The association is awaiting grants for funding the recreation project.

A large stone barn at Delphi, built around 1896, will be restored for use as a community center or shopping plaza. Pierce's Barn is located on an acre of land which adjoins the canal. The group recently accepted an option to purchase the land.

The barn, originally built to store road construction equipment and house office space for James M. Pierce for his construction business, will be the first building to be restored. Overholser advises that it will be the "center of canal activity."

Built during Canal Boom

Interest in the construction of a canal to run from Fort Wayne to Lafayette was aroused around 1825, during the era known as the Canal Boom. The completion of the Erie Canal in that year sparked interest in the area to construct the canal.

Work on the canal began February 22, 1832, shortly before a land grant from the federal government would have expired. Interest in the project began many years before, but much opposition to the project, as well as uncertainty as to the possibilities of funding caused a considerable time lag, a problem which was a plague to the project all along.

A $200,000 loan from the Legislature provided initial funding.

Irish laborers (Many of their decendants still live in the area.) first dug a channel, measuring 30 feet wide and six feet deep. The sides and bottoms of the canal were tamped solid and lined with a layer of stiff clay.

Using gunpowder to blast through the thick earth, the Irish laborers worked only with axe, shovel, picks, and saw to build the long canal. Oxen and horse teams were also used.

A towpath walker was hired to patrol the canal to inspect the completed portion and report damage caused by rodents. The canal builders worked diligently to keep down weeds and tree sprouts.

A stone arch, built to carry the canal over a creek, was termed a "wonder in its day." Several feet wide, it was made up of stones carried by oxen teams, some 12 feet or more in length and two feet thick.

In January of 1836 Congress passed the Internal Improvements Bill which allowed for a grant of $100,000 for the canal project. Labelled a "folly" by many politicians, the measure led eventually to financial disaster.

Initial Plans Didn't Include Delphi

Ironically, the initial plans did not provide for the canal to pass through Delphi. An embittered battle between diverse factions was eventually won by those who favored the construction to go through Delphi. This called for construction facilities for the canal to cross the Wabash River.

The canal began above Fort Wayne where a feeder dam was built. It was completed to Huntington in 1835, to Logansport in 1838, and to Delphi late in 1840.

Through Carroll County the canal right of way had to be forged through heavy timber on the northeast section, swamps just north of Delphi, and the rolling Duck Creek Prairie on south.

As was the case with most canals, the Wabash & Erie was an important trasportation and communication link. It was a great factor in the progress of the state as it allowed for immigration to unsettled land and transporting of goods to these areas.

Financial Failure

But, also like most other canals victims of the monster railroads, it was a financial failure. Originally a responsibility of the state of Indiana, the canal's failure contributed to the state's bankruptcy in 1873. It was returned to the responsibility of the trustees when the legislature passed a law repudiating the debt.

The canal trustees surrendered the trust to the Wabash Railroad in 1874. The railroad bought both the canal and the surrounding land.

The canal has contained water ever since its construction except for a short period during the 1953 drought.

In February 1881, floods damaged many bridges and sets of locks along the canal route, and eventually the aqueduct deteriorated, due to considerable abuse from thoughtless humans and inclement weather conditions.

Officials of the restoration group believe that both area residents and tourists will be attracted to the restored canal area to make use of the improved recreational facilities, view the scenic improvements, and investigate the historic attractions.

bished for use as a community center or shopping arcade.

First Public Meetings Here To Organize Canal Transportation

11-22-47 Trib

By A. R. Markle.

AS a part of the canal movement in 1837, Terre Haute agitated for a part in the transportation to be had and as the terminal of the Wabash & Erie Canal was not to come farther than Lafayette. the Cross Cut canal was started from Terre Haute to the White River at what was expected to be a junction with the branch running through Indianapolis from Peru and south to White River.

Work was done on both routes but stopped after the project came near ruining the credit of the state. May 25, 1837, William Wines & Co. were advertising in the Terre Haute papers for 150 men to work on the summit level 10 miles from Terre Haute. They were to be paid $20 a month with board or $1 a day and board themselves. Good fare and punctual payments were promised and a lot of work had been done when the money ran out.

Attempts to Finish.

Terre Haute business men, millers, farmers and all interested in the completion of the canal met frequently in an effort to get the Cross Cut canal finished despite the failure of the state. Various proposals were made and the General Assembly passed an act permitting private capital to go on with the work but the conditions attached did not appeal to men like Rose, Blake, Deming, Gilbert and others to whom the canal meant a profitable outlet for grain and merchandise and lower costs on both incoming and outgoing freight and these efforts failed. Eastern capitalists who had invested in the bonds as well as English and other foreign investors finally got together and appointed Charles Butler to deal with the state in an effort to complete the canal so that there would be some return on their money or to arrange a settlement of their claims. Many plans were proposed but there was little hope that the state could pay the bonds so liberally issued or that the canal could be completed by the state so as to earn dividends.

Resumption of Work.

Butler finally took over the most of the construction under an agreement that he would finance its completion and operation. He was to receive a part of the tolls and earnings and in various ways the canal was again started, the Cross Cut finished as well as the extension from Lafayette. But by the time the traffic started on the system, the railroads began to cut into the shipments and earnings fell off due to competition, not only in rates but in sure and speedy transportation. Not only did the revenue diminish but the expenses increased and the whole affair crumbled into ruin.

Competition.

The canal was at all times subject to damage by floods in the spring and winter, was often delayed in resuming traffic in the spring until the cream of the trade in grain or manufactured goods that had waited for it to open after winter had caused it to suspend, had taken no other means to get to market and the tendency of the railroads to make lower rates in summer than in winter hurt as badly as the cost of repairs themselves. With the first boats reaching Terre Haute in October, 1849, there was but little shipping that fall and the opening of the 1850 season, while a profitable season for the north followed, it was not until June that traffic began to the south. Then with but two years of good business as far as income went, the railroad from Terre Haute to Indianapolis afforded an outlet to the Ohio river by the Madison Road. Meantime, the Wabash carried a great deal of traffic almost all year round. The latter was not to be overlooked as an important competitor. The "great boat" of 1854 was 150 feet long, 23½ feet wide and carried 395 tons of freight, 5,730 sacks of corn containing 13,950 bushels. While an ordinary box car can handle much more than that qualtity, the railroads of the day needed a small train to handle it. Even as late as 1890 there were many ten-ton cars in use.

Breaks in the Canal.

The section of the canal between here and Lafayette was in some cases built on the very bank of the Wabash, often subject to being ruined by high water. The acqueduct that carried it over Spring Creek was only 10½ feet above low water and the Wabash has risen as much as 20 feet above low water mark. From Raccoon Creek to near Spring Creek the river washed the bluff and the bank of the canal was practically in the river itself. From Raccoon to Terre Haute was a continuous level, the lock there being the last on the line. A break in this section in 1861 delayed traffic in August, the busiest season of shipping, as low water in the river usually prevented the steamboats running. A break just above town once washed out a hole ten feet below the bed of the canal, while the cutting of the bank of the reservoir in Clay County was almost the last straw. Operation was finally given up as a failure to the north in 1869, while it ceased altogether to the south a few years earlier. The bed through town was finally used for the construction of our first sewer, then covered over.

The Vandalia Railroad built over it, while to the south of Sycamore and in front of the Union Station there is now no sign to mark its course.

Community Affairs File

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Personalities involved with Wabash & Erie Canal

Wabash & Erie Canal

Historically Speaking

By Dorothy Clark

Community Affairs File

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At least four Terre Haute men held active roles in the short-lived Wabash and Erie Canal — Linton, Blake, Scott and Dowling.

William C. Linton was one of the three-man fund board for the canal. Appointed by the governor, Linton, a state senator and prosperous merchant, was "probably adequate in the role of commissioner," according to Paul Fatout's book "Indiana Canals," but the "general impression was that he lacked the good judgement of his colleagues. Some contemporaries said that his chief faults were too much credulity and vanity. Credulity was undesirable in loan negotiations, but it might be modified by the caution of the other two."

In the summer of 1832, Linton and another fund commissioner, Jeremiah Sullivan of Madison, set out for New York City. The trip was a test of stamina — taking stage or carriage, or jogging on horseback, to a port on the Ohio River; there embarking on a steamboat for a voyage upriver to Pittsburgh; then traveling by canal and stage to and over the mountains — a journey interrupted by stops, changes and breakdowns — to Phildadelphia; rattling over additional miles via stage and loose-jointed railroad, and finally arriving in New York City after ten days or so of jolting and jouncing, indifferent food, and sleeplessness in hostelries infested with fleas and bedbugs. "The ordeal made the Hoosiers complain mildly, but not very much, considering," said Fatout.

Linton described New York as "this city of trade and noise," but he found it difficult to raise funds. No one had ever heard of the proposed Hoosier canal. Loan certificates had to be engraved in New York, then trundled all the way back to Indiana to be counter-signed by the state treasurer. Then McCarty carried them back to New York. In the 1830s fund commissioners did all these chores themselves, and $104,573.23 was in the till by the end of the year.

After more than a year's work, canal commissioners could point, not with much pride, to some five miles of completed channel (but no water) three miles almost ready, and 32 miles under contract.

Terre Haute citizens proposed that the Wabash & Erie Canal be extended to Mount Vernon on the Ohio River, and made wider and deeper there to float flatboats bound for New Orleans, permitting every farmer to have a boat at his front door. We had our share of dreams too in those early years!

In 1834, Linton was entrusted with a heavy load of specie for the bank — $21,200 of which $1,000 was in half dollars — and had a harrowing time guarding it from thieves on the long trip from Philadelphia. Rogues, he said, "are generally fools," but he took no chances, and he proved that he was not so credulous as some thought by engaging an armed escort so that two of them could share round-the-clock sentry duty.

He saw the treasure safely aboard a train to Columbia, Pa., where he kept an eye on it in the hurly-burly of changing baggage. The canal being out of repair, he hired a wagon to Harrisburg and there embarked on a canal boat for Hollidaysburg.

There he changed, again to a railroad of sorts over the mountains, then took a canal boat to Pittsburgh, where, like a bloodhound, he followed the precious package stowed among tons of freight hauled to the river front.

The last leg, by steamboat down the Ohio, was somewhat easier but stil not safe, for light-fingered thieves were as likely to be aboard steamboats as anywhere else. Linton, haggard and groggy from lack of sleep, stayed on the job, and he delivered the specie to the Madison branch bank without having lost a single half dollar. How he would have appreciated today's armored cars and sub-machine guns!

Linton died in 1834-35 while on duty in Philadelphia, and his vacancy was filled by Samuel Hanna as fund commissioner.

From among 20 candidates angling for positions on the state board of internal improvements, Thomas H. Blake of Vigo County was one of six appointed by Gov. Noble. He had been a member of the general assembly. A newspaper editor said he could not tolerate the "stiff, proud, haughty snuff-taking aristocracy" of T. Blake.

Blake was assigned the supervision of the connecting canal, called the Cross-Cut, between the Wabash & Erie at Terre Haute and the Central

Lucius H. Scott of Terre Haute was a former school teacher, store keeper and county sheriff. He was once associated with former commissio William Linton. He had also served one term as representative in the legislature. He was appointed a member of a two-man board by Gov. Wallace and served with Milton Stapp, a Madison lawyer, veteran of the War of 1812, and a member of the branch of the state bank.

One casualty of the 1848 cholera epidemic which struck the Wabash & Erie Canal was its resident trustee, Thomas Blake. He was replaced by Thomas Dowling of Terre Haute, erstwhile printer and newspaper publisher, a peppery character with the dogged tenacity to cope with the vexations of a trustee's job.

He and Butler remained on the board until the end. On Oct. 25, 1849, two line boats, the E.A. HANNEGAN and the G.R. WALKER, carrying a number of political honorables, shared the honor of being first into Terre Haute. Townsmen hurrahed, fired guns, paraded with a band, and treated themselves, boat captains, and important guests to a dinner at the Prairie House, complete with orations and toasts.

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Wm. J. Ball was the engineer in charge of the construction of the Wabash and Erie Canal from Lafayette to Terre Haute and on much of the Cross Cut Canal between here and the White River. Here it was met by the Central Canal coming down from the upper Wabash to Indianapolis. That portion was never finished on account of lack of water but the feeder dam was built together with a smaller section of the canal which is now apart of the Indianapolis water system. What part I do not know nor do I care to know for certainly Indianapolis people to not like to think that the bathers at Broadripple disported themselves in what was to their drinking water and also goolish stories of dead horses as well as dead man being found in that section of the canal.

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Canal's Cross Cut used for 10 years

Canals (Ind) SPC File

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Historically speaking

Clark is Vigo County's official historian and formerly worked for The Terre Haute Tribune.

By Dorothy Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

Newcomers to the Wabash Valley always are interested in learning more about the Wabash & Erie Canal and its effect on the development of the towns and communities it touched during its short span of activity.

As early as 1827 Congress granted the land upon which to build the canal. In 1830 and 1831 the Indiana Legislature authorized the beginning of construction, and work was actually begun in 1832 on that section lying between Toledo, Ohio, and Lafayette, Ind.

That part of the canal between the Wabash River at Terre Haute and the White River at Worthington was known as the Cross Cut. This section crossed Clay County from northwest to southeast, intersecting Perry, Lewis and Harrison townships.

In Clay County, 37,171 acres of land were involved in the land grants. This acreage was later sold by the Canal Co. for $1.25 to $2.50 an acre according to its assessment and location.

Both ends of the Cross Cut had to be fed from the waters of Eel River and its tributaries, because the summit divide between the Wabash and White rivers lies in Clay County. It was necessary to construct a feeder dam and the Splunge Creek Reservoir.

The dam was begun about 1837 and completed in two years. At the same time construction was in progress of the side cut for conducting the water from the dam to the main canal. As the line of the channel lay across Birch Creek, it was necessary to build an aqueduct across the stream in 1838.

No work was done by the state on the lower section of the Cross Cut between the junction and White River. Because of the depression and financial panic of 1837, the state was unable to meet its obligations, so work on the Wabash & Erie Canal stopped in 1839.

In 1845 the citizens along the line of the proposed canal agitated for its completion and petitioned the state legislature. In January 1846 an elaborate bill was passed, supplemented by another in January 1847. Finally work was resumed. Much of the state's early work was rapidly decaying.

The canal was completed to Terre Haute and the first boat arrived with much fanfare. Meanwhile, work progressed in Clay County on the Cross Cut, the Side Cut and the Feeders. Eel River Dam and the Birch Creek Aqueduct were rebuilt. Splunge Creek Reservoir was constructed by throwing up an embankment across the valley from the foot of Old Hill, two miles north, to the junction of the Side Cut with the main canal.

This work was completed in 1849, or early in 1850, and the reservoir filled with water in the fall of 1850. On May 1, 1850, the water from Eel River first reached Terre Haute through the Cross Cut.

As soon as the channel was filled sufficiently to allow navigation, communication was established between Terre Haute and Bowling Green. Slack water on Eel River extended as far up as the Thomas Ferry. Clay County residents, citizens of Terre Haute and officers of the canal company were excited and anxious to open the canal and celebrate the great event.

On May 18, 1850, a party started out from Terre Haute bound for Bowling Green with a small cannon aboard, but their launching proved premature. Their boat was grounded before going very far and they were compelled to return and wait for higher water.

But by the last of May or first of June, the boat "Oleus" made the trip carrying a number of distinguished persons, along with the cannon and ammunition. Men, women and children flocked from all directions to witness the event. The "Oleus" and her crew were given big ovations at the Junction, the Dam, at Bellaire and Bowling Green, where it was reported residents and visitors "indulged in a drunken jollification."

This was the only trip ever made to Bowling Green by a boat plying on the main canal not owned and operated by Clay County residents. Business enterprises and commercial activities were stimulated by the canal opening. Some of the canal boats used in this area were the "Belle of Bowling Green," the "Eight O's," the "Julia Dean" and a rude towboat called the "Bull of the Woods."

As near as can be determined, the Cross Cut was used for about 10 years. The first boat passed through Terre Haute to Worthington in the spring of 1851 loaded with salt. The last boat, traveling from Worthington to Terre Haute in the spring of 1861, was loaded with flour belonging to Augustus Stark and bound for Lafayette and Toledo.

THE REAL "EARLY DAYS."

Facts About the Old Wabash & Erie Canal Told by One Who Knew Every Crook and Turn in the Old Waterway.

Mrs. William Mack, 116 North Eighth, wrote a letter to Mrs. Richard A. Morris, for many years a resident of Terre Haute, but now living in Boston, with B. G. Hudnut and family, asking about certain early time features of Terre Haute.

The following are some extracts from Mrs. Morris' letter:

You ask about the old Wabash & Erie canal. The course of the canal, as I remember, crossed from the east side of the town to Second street just north of Sycamore, about where the Vandalia Railroad crosses. It wound around, crossing Third to Second, turning at Chestnut, where there were several locks on the corner of Chestnut and Second, near James Ross' old homestead.

The canal boats dropped down through these locks into the canal basin at the foot of Eagle and First, just opposite my father's home on the corner of Chestnut and First. It was very exciting, the going out and coming in of the canal packets, as they were called. Crowds of people went to see departing and arriving friends, and the tandem mules, propelling with ropes and chains to us the "magnificent" little packets.

I remember going to Perrysville with Carrie Gookins to visit Tillie Martin, Mrs. Spencer M. Rice's cousin; also numerous trips to Montezuma and other northern "resorts." The only excitement was when the mules refused to go, or inadvertently got off the towpath, requiring all the force in the boat to right them again.

Where the Stage Coach Stopped.

In the winter the canal basin was a fine skating resort. Before the advent of the canal, the stage coach (with the driver, who looked like a king to the small boys) driving four horses and sometimes six, was a feature. The entry into the village was exciting, the coach driver cracking his whip, with a grand flourish, blowing his horn, the horses gaily prancing to the entrance of the old Stewart Tavern, on Second between Main and Cherry. I remember the canal office you spoke of, and also W. J. Ball, the civil engineer, the father of Wm. C. and Spencer F. Ball, who occupied the office.

It comes to me now that the Vandalia Railroad utilized the old canal bed from east of town to Second. You speak of Wm. J. Ball's letter about the laying of rails on the then Terre Haute & Richmond Railroad. My husband (Mr. Morris) at that time and before 1853 was a civil engineer under Scotch Wood, an uncle of W. W. Parsons. Mr. Morris came to Terre Haute direct from Gambier, O., having been a student in civil engineering, and got his position through Tom Morris, of Indianapolis.

I well remember the strenuous times he and Charles R. Peddle, father of Professor John B. Peddle and Mrs. Sarah P. Burton, had when the first trains were put on the road. Often there were exhausted or frozen water stations. Mr. Peddle had his feet frozen once and was often out all night looking after the affairs of the road. I do not remember any private cars at that time. Every one worked from the president down.

Chauncey Rose took great interest in everything connected with the road. At that time he boarded at the "Prairie House," now the Terre Haute. I well remember the old landmarks—the Indiana Orchard, near the Water Works, the old burying ground on Water street just north of Chestnut. We were horrified when excavations near were being made for the canal, as so many graves were dug up on the river side.

The funeral processions wound around my father's place to this resting spot of the pioneers. Many of the marble tablets and memorial tablets are in the Third street cemetery. My father's and that of James Ross were the third brick residences built in Terre Haute. An uncle of mine had the contract for the building of the Linton house, corner of Fifth and Ohio, afterwards the home of Lucius Scott. Part of the old house is now standing, and Thomas Hite and others have offices there.

My summer trips to Lafayette and other northern towns as far as Kalamazoo, Mich., in my father's carriage are pleasant reminiscences. There was no rush in these pioneer days. There were corduroy roads, so good when good and so bad when bad, and lined with cranberry marshes and a vast expanse of scenery. There was plenty of time to see everything, not merely getting the most advanced impressionistic views as now in racing automobiles.

Inviting "Wayside Inns."

The hospitable farmers enroute were one of the delightful happenings of those trips. Then there were the "Wayside Inns" plentifully supplied with fried chicken, hot soda biscuits, baked in a skillet over burning coals, numberless varieties of preserves, and then such wonderful feather beds. Carriages in those days were made to carry baggage and a large lunch box, just as automobile touring cars of today.

Mrs. Samuel S. Early and daughter Florence, are coming to Terre Haute soon to see Miss Maria Smith. Mrs. Early has been thinking of coming for some time and Miss Maria's accident has decided her to go now. The death of Mrs. W. C. Buntin was not a surprise, for we knew of her serious heart trouble. She had written such a cheerful letter in January, a letter so full of dear little David, her grandson. Mrs. Buntin wrote that she was propped up in bed breathing so hard that little David said: "Mum, mum, why don't you pant like a dog; it might be easier?" He said to the doctor, "If you can't make a new heart for Mum Mum, as doctors can make new arms and legs, why do you come here?"

Mrs. Buntin was a dear, good neighbor. White (Mrs. B. G. Hudnut) felt all broken up when the sad news came. We remember Mrs. Rottman very well. She was so helpful and pleasant, entering into the spirit of the church work at St. Stephen's with zest. Her death was very sad. I dare not allow myself to dwell on all the sad changes in the Church Aid Society. We are quite accessible to the city, Trinity church and the Cathedral of St. Paul, but I have not been able to get out much this winter because of the heavy snows.

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